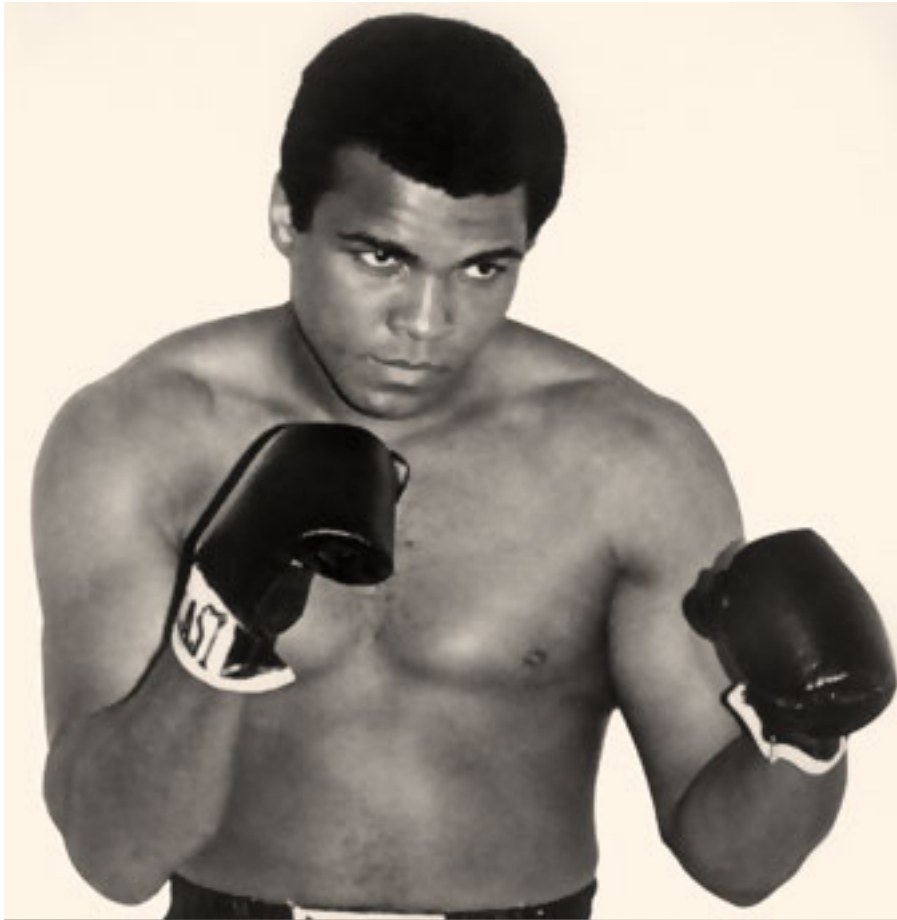


Who's Really 'The Greatest' Heavyweight Champion Ever?

Written by Kelsey McCarson
Thursday, 15 August 2013 18:11



Boxing writers like to make lists. It's sort of what we do. I suppose it's been officially that way ever since promoter Tex Rickard and publisher Nat Fleisher devised the original Ring Magazine ratings policy back in the 1920s, but it was likely a part of boxing long before that. I can picture fans of the old-time, pioneer pugilists listing and rating the great champions of their day, too, if

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not with the written word then at least with each other in heated barroom debates.

To me, there is no more intriguing debate in the genre than the ranking of all-time great heavyweight champions. In fact, I've spent an embarrassing amount of time in my life thinking about the topic. There is so much to consider on the subject, and it seems as if every boxing historian in the world has given his or her two cents on the matter to boot.

Still, there seems to be a good enough consensus across the board to say there are really only a handful of legitimate contenders for the high honor of laying claim to the very top spot: the greatest.

Here's a little bit of information on each fighter to help you decide who you think should get the nod. I've listed them below in chronological order: the five definitive fighters of the heavyweight division.

Jack Johnson

"The Galveston Giant" was heavyweight boxing's first great defensive fighter. He was a master of slips, parries, arm blocks and jams, and his ring generalship was said to be without equal. Johnson was the first black heavyweight champion. He defeated Tommy Burns in 1908 and held the title until he lost to giant slugger Jess Willard in 1915. Johnson later claimed to have thrown the fight at the behest of his promoters, but there's never been a definitive call on the matter. Jack Dempsey called Johnson, "the greatest catcher of punches that ever lived...he could fight all night. He was a combination of Jim Corbett and [Joe] Louis. I'm glad I didn't have to fight him."

Ring Magazine founder and longtime editor Nat Fleisher considered Johnson the best heavyweight he ever saw, which included other men on this list like Jack Dempsey, Joe Louis and a young Muhammad Ali.

Jack Dempsey

Dempsey was the roughest sort of hobo you could imagine. He made his way around the world by train long before he hit it big as a prizefighter, but not like those highfalutin hobos who rode inside the cars. No, Jack Dempsey rode the rails by snagging a ride beneath the train, laying

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himself atop thin metal bars between the undercarriage of the carts and the train track, between life and death.

When a man such as this gets to town, he heads to the only place he can: a bar. There, Dempsey would make himself a few dollars by fighting anyone and everyone who cared to tussle that night. In short, Jack Dempsey was a badass.

Dempsey was an offensive juggernaut. He had punishing power in both hands, and he used them with ferocious intent. He won the heavyweight championship in 1919 by brutalizing the giant Jess Willard over three one-sided rounds in a fight that was over almost as soon as it started. Right before the bout was set to begin, Dempsey learned he had a substantial amount of money to gain if he knocked Willard out in the first round because of a side bet his manager, Jack Kearns, made on his behalf. What followed was perhaps the most brutal, one-sided, first round beatdown in boxing history. Despite it, Dempsey lost the bet. Willard was saved by the bell, and after some confusion that lead Jack to believe he had already won the fight, was remarkably deemed okay to continue by Referee Ollie Pecord. Dempsey had to come back to the ring, and then he finished the big lug off in round three.

Dempsey held the title for almost seven years, fighting sparingly, until he was bested by careful technician Gene Tunney, who had made it his life's missions to defeat the Great Jack Dempsey, and then did so.

Boxing writer Ted Carroll said Dempsey "possessed the natural gifts of unusual quickness, inborn savagery, ruggedness and punching power...his attack was tigerlike [sic] in its intensity." It's no wonder, then, that fans dubbed him the "Manassas Mauler."

Rocky Marciano

For being the only man on this list to retire unbeaten, Rocky Marciano seems to be consistently underrated by most historians today. The "Brockton Blockbuster" was as tough as they come. He'd come forward, slipping and catching as many punches as he could until he put himself in position to land his devastatingly hard punches.

The Rock won the heavyweight crown in 1952 by defeating Jersey Joe Walcott in classic

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fashion. Walcott dropped Marciano in the first round, then steadily built a point advantage until he got knocked out in round thirteen round by Marciano's signature "Suzie Q" overhand right. Marciano held the title until he retired in 1955, besting hall-of-famers Ezzard Charles and Archie Moore along the way.

Perhaps Marciano's greatest attribute was simply his grit and determination. Our own Springs Toledo notes Marciano would be "unlikely to ever lose a test of wills" and that "he seemed to get stronger as fights wore on and opponents wore out."

And Marciano wore all of them out. All of them.

Joe Louis

Truth be told, I happen to be of the opinion that God made one perfect heavyweight prizefighter, and that it was Joe Louis. It's a sentiment shared by many notable boxing historians, though the bulk of the balance might lean towards Muhammad Ali.

"The Brown Bomber" put together the most impressive championship reign in the history of the sport. He kept the heavyweight crown on his head for almost 12 years, defending it a record 25 times before he retired. He was a remarkable 58-1 at the time, having avenged his only loss (Max Schmeling) by first round knockout. It was a picture perfect display of his unparalleled power, speed and technical precision. Louis was devastatingly accurate and wielded beautifully mechanical combination punches with frightening ease. He wasn't just a monster in the ring. Louis was a machine.

In 2003, Ring Magazine praised him as the greatest puncher of all-time. Our resident historical expert, Frank Lotierzo, calls Louis "the most faultless heavyweight fighter in history." Moreover the International Boxing Research Organization ranks Louis the top heavyweight in history according to its most recently updated member poll in 2006.

Boxing.com's Matt McGrain hails Louis "as capable a combination puncher as ever lived, his hands were lightning, devastatingly accurate, he punched with huge power and maximum economy...who could force the attack with horrifying results."

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Muhammad Ali

Many ring historians consider Muhammad Ali one of the top heavyweight champions ever, most often being placed in either the first or second position. Ring Magazine ranked him number one among all-time heavyweight champions in 1998, while the International Boxing Research Organization ranked him second under the same criteria in 2006.

While the weight of certain criteria may be debatable, less so is the stature of his resume in the sports' grandest division. There is simply no heavyweight champion in history that defeated as many top contenders and fellow all-time greats as Ali.

Ali was tall for a heavyweight, but he patterned his style after the little guys. His "float like a butterfly, sting like a bee" tactic mesmerized his opponents when he was young. He'd pop his pristine jab to their jaws and follow it up with hard right crosses almost at will, all the while avoiding a return with his tremendously fast feet.

When Ali slowed down a bit in the later years, he showed he had an all-time great chin to go along with his already impressive repertoire. His three encounters with Joe Frazier, in which he went 2-1, included moments that were some of the best in boxing history. His 1974 upset of the previously undefeated George Foreman ranks among the greatest upsets in boxing history, and he's the only man to win the lineal heavyweight championship three times.

Through Ali's title reigns, 1964-1970, 1974-1978 and 1978-1979, he amassed a total of 19 successful title defenses.

The Other Guys

Other men may have claim for consideration, too, but none quite make the grade completely. Sticking to chronological order, James J. Jeffries comes to mind. He was probably the biggest and the best of the old-timers, and he retired undefeated before foolishly trying his hand against Jack Johnson over five years and fifty pounds later. George Foreman and Joe Frazier were great, but neither solidified himself as the best of his era. To that end, wherever you come out on the Mike Tyson, Evander Holyfield and Lennox Lewis debate, you might think that person has a shot at the list. But the fact that it's a lively debate at all leaves enough mystery to leave all of them out. Finally, Wladimir Klitschko may be on his way there someday, but his career still

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has a ways to go and finding top notch competition will remain tough as ever.

So who's really the greatest heavyweight champion of all-time?

That's for you to decide, TSS readers. Tell us who you think is really 'The Greatest' heavyweight champion ever. Leave a comment in our forum, or tweet us at @TSSBoxingNews using the hashtag #Greatest. Is there someone else that should be on this list? Is there someone here that doesn't belong? Let us know!

[Comment on this article](#)

Radam G says:

The greatest heavy of all times was no doubt Muhammad Ali. The greatest heavyweight of all times with the least respect is Tommy Burns. The most skillful greatest heavyweight of all times is Bob FitzSimmon. The most underrated greatest heavyweight of all times is a deadheat tie between Rocky Marciano and Lennox Lewis. Holla!

amayseng says:

good rundown.

after years and years of viewing, enjoying and debating to my own mind i honestly cant pick one.

each on the top 5 list had many quality wins, title reigns and goat moments...

i do agree though that marciano does not get much respect for the top 5 list, but he is on it no doubt

ArneK. says:

Here all along I thought that I was the only person in the world who thought that Tommy Burns was underrated. Mr. Radam G, I believe you are spot on. True enough, the dude had physical shortcomings, but he could take a man out with one punch. Unfortunately for Burns, his signature fight was with Jack Johnson and his performance was so pitiful that it overshadowed everything else. Do we downgrade Ali because of his pathetic showing against Larry Holmes? Heck no, nor should we be so quick to write off Tommy Burns, albeit the circumstances were much different. The fact that Jack Johnson toyed with him, speaks reams about Johnson. I'm not sure I would put Joe Louis in the top five. True, he had a long title reign, but his management steered him away from good fighters that shared his pigmentation. When I asked Eddie Futch (who sparred with Louis in the gym) how the Brown Bomber would have fared against Muhammad Ali, Futch replied that Louis "was dangerous in a tight circumference." He wasn't going to say anything negative about his old friend and fellow Detroiter, but I inferred from his diplomatic response that he thought Ali would have been too slick for him. Some

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people will say it's nuts to reference one (or both) of the Klitschko brothers in an article about the best heavyweights of all time. Not me. Good piece.

amayseng says:

just watched marciano vs jersey joe one and two,

damn, marciano was undersized for a hw. but still, he had destroying power,,

this alone should elevate him a bit, a smaller fighter destroying bigger guys, elite bigger guys

bigstinkybug says:

[COLOR="#800000">u guys might laugh, but it's my opinion..and that was the question... but, I think Vitali is the greatest. He's the biggest at 250, he's extremely aggressive, has a beautiful jab, he's taller than any of the greats at 6'7", he can take a punch, his power has never been suspect and he's always in shape... he made Lennox, a top 10 heavyweight of all time, re-tire than give a re-match... there is NO WAY Ali, at 215, would beat Vitali at 250... NO WAY.

Ali was the fastest. He was the heavyweight version of Mayweather. truth is, Ali probably never beat Ken Norton.. and would've had trouble with many of fighters of recent past... Bowe, Holy, Ibeabuchi, Tua, Lennox, Wald, ..to name a few.

most under-rated... probably Vitai as well. it is fact that Vitali has never been behind in a scorecard... and even in his two losses, was ahead.

most vicious was Mike Tyson... there was a time when professionals with padded gloves didn't even want to spar with him... I remember his sparring partners making 1k a week... there was a time, 86-88, wher Mike was the bad-est man on the planet.

most over-rated... prob Ali. like Holmes once said "cuz he talks betta dan me, don'ts make em betta dan me"...

best chin... prob Holy...

hardest puncher... prob Tua... young Tua.

beat heavy who never made it... ike Ibeabuchi[COLOR]

Radam G says:

Much respect, Bigstinkybug. At least you are telling it like you see it. In a 100 years when all of us are DEAD to the DEADest power, Bigstinkybug V will be echoing your words. Hehehehe! And Radam V will be saying: "Danggit! That great-grand pops of my to the fifth power was DEEP! The peeps of his time musta' fo'got and been ASLEEP! GOAT Ali is STILL the greatest heavyweight of all times. Hahaha! Holla!" Holla!

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teaser says:

yupthe Ali of the seventies would have had trouble with some of those guysbut remember his prime was in the sixties...faster and slicker and a dancer for 15 rounds...most of us remember the older slower Ali who fought in spurts...which was still good enough to beat the best of the seventies ..I'd trade you 10 Vitalies for one Ali anyway

brownsugar says:

[QUOTE=bigstinkybug;34985][COLOR="#800000">>u guys might laugh, but it's my opinion..and that was the question... but, I think Vitali is the greatest. He's the biggest at 250, he's extremely aggressive, has a beautiful jab, he's taller than any of the greats at 6'7", he can take a punch, his power has never been suspect and he's always in shape... he made Lennox,a top 10 heavyweight of all time, re-tire than give a re-match... there is NO WAY Ali,at 215, would beat Vitali at 250... NO WAY.

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beat heavy who never made it... ike Ibeabuchi

p.s..all respect to the jack Johnsons and Fritzimmons of yesteryear...but it was just sooooo long ago..i can't give an honest educated response on how great they were bases on a few videos...so I stick to what I think I know, boxing of the last 50 years.
[/COLOR][[/QUOTE]

Vitali and his brother are credible candidates ...
they have proven that much...no more can it be said the KBros wouldn't have had a chance.

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But I disagree. An old out of shape Lewis gave Vitali hell and was "coming on" at the time of the stoppage. However its reasonable to propose the possibility given their size and skill.....although I think Holmes would have beaten them both and Cooney would have stopped Wlad...just my humble opinion...

bigstinkybug says:

[COLOR="#800000">man..Lennox was in shape..don't let anyone tell u different... especially Lennox. U know what happens to Lennox when he's not in tip top shape?... he gets ko'ed like he was ko'ed in his previous losses. Lennox even stated he'd fight Wlad... but when a re-match was brought up, he re-tired.

i'd make that trade..10 Vitali's for 1 Ali... i'd have a better fighter and a better human being.. i'd take that over an over-rated, draft dodging motormouth anyway.[/COLOR]

amayseng says:

lennox was past it and out of shape...

he got knocked out before by a rahman nuclear right hand, not from being out of shape..

vitali lost to his best opponent in an older and out of shape lennox..

thats very telling in the least.

wlad has been knocked out disturbingly more than once..

he has come back a strong and solid champion, but he would get demolished by those top five guys...

Radam G says:

Don't forget that draft dodging and motormouth don't win fights. It is all about da skills to pay da bills. I'm going out on my shield with GOAT Ali. He is THE GREATEST of ALL TIMES!!!

The K-bro/docs are the greatest of their weak-arse era, not of all times. In every era, Tallies and biggies got busted up badly BIG TIME!

The reason for the season of the K-bros/docs is that the money in every weight division now is popping heavily, and the pseudoweight division of cruiserweight is the border where good fighter don't go north of.

If it were not for the money, B-Hop, SOG Ward, Dragon Calzaghe, Lights out Toney and a few more fighter that I cannot think of right now, woulda went up in weight to that BIG Money, and the K-bros/docs wouldn't even be afterthoughts.

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The only reason that they won in the amateurs was because of the pseudoweight division of super heavyweight. The average-sized and little fudge up da tallies and biggies 85 percent of the time. Holla!

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i think they are both two exceptional hw fighters, but they cant hold a candle to those top five guys, not with what we have seen.

do you think wlad would have been able to beat a prime tyson,holyfield, bowe, riddick, leninix lewis?

if he cant dominate those guys let alone beat them he cant be mentioned in the above top 5.

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Radam G says:

Money being paid in every division, and the making of pseudo divisions to halt the smaller guns from having to move northward in weight to get phat pay has benefitted the K-docs/bros and all tall-and-big @sses dominating in fighting, but money.

The heavies use to get the grandest pay -- not now. Because those who would've been ruling that sorry-arse division are getting paid more moolah at welterweight, middleweight, the pseudo-division of super middleweight and light heavyweight.

Fanfaronades, groupies and haters suffer from inattention blindness and size hype. Giants, biggies and tallies ain't done syet except in basketball. Boxing is not their cup of tea except for setups. The K-bros/docs are aight! They are not setups to the degree of Jess Willard, Primo Canelo -- I mean Carnera -- Nikolai Valuev and Henry Akinwande.

Since the K-bros/docs's era, you now have the top paid footballers, baseballers and basketballers making more moolah than the top heavyweight champion of the alphabet-sanctioning corrupted commission organizations.

There are always exceptions to the rule. One will be Tyson "Fists" of Fury. Holla!

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one thing I will say, they r the smartest fighters to ever fight in the heavyweight div. Wlad has a weak chin... but since noticing that, no one can touch his chin. he'll jab, jab,jab... break u down..and by the 5th, he's landing heavy shots. Wlad against Bowe and Holyfield..Wlad all day... Lennox would be a tuff fight... prime Tyson(86-88) possibly Ko's Wlad... Vitali beats everyone of those fighters,IMO.[/COLOR]

gibola says:

I'm aware not many will agree with me but I'll go with Larry Holmes. I've said it before on here and I won't go on at length again, but I take the peak Holmes of 82, he's the best, most skilled, heavyweight boxer I've ever seen. I'll repeat it - Holmes of 82 beats Ali of 74. Not trying to be controversial, I think a peak Holmes has hell but beats the three 70s greats (Ali, Frazier and Foreman). I also think Holmes would have been too game and too busy for Lewis, Bowe and the Ks. Can't prove it, I may be wrong, but there you go.

amayseng says:

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vitali couldnt beat everyone of those fighters because in his prime he lost to an older lennox

Radam G says:

Gibola! Nothing, but deep respect. None of us can prove Jack, or who woulda been da baddest boxing Mack. All we can do is speculate and debate. So it is all love, not an ounce of hate. Holla!

bigstinkybug says:

[QUOTE=amayseng;35059]vitali couldnt beat everyone of those fighters because in his prime he lost to an older lennox[/QUOTE]

[COLOR="#800000">*U need to get ur facts straight... the fight was stopped on cuts... cuts

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that were caused by a thumb in the 2nd... Vitali was thumbed badly twice in the same round... Lennox should've been deducted two points, one for holding Vitali around the neck, through-out the entire fight..and another for holding and hitting. in the 2nd, if Lennox isn't holding around the neck, he goes down. Lastly, Vitali was ahead 4-2... , and on his way to ko'ing Lennox... we'll never know..

but Lennox had been traing for a fight againt kirk Johnson... so don't bring out that crap that he wasn't in shape... that fight should've been a no contest, but the referee sucked... very biased in that fight.[/COLOR]

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well then if thats the case Ali should have lost 9-10 fights for holding and hitting and never been in the best hw of all time debate...

you cant go on by what shoulda or coulda happened, each fighter obviously fought within the limits allowed by the ref at that time.

bigstinkybug says:

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[COLOR="#800000">*but u say Vitali lost to an overweight , out of shape fighter... then get in shape and give him a rematch... Lennox is a little bitch. he'd rather talk than back it up... Lennox did everything he could to take out Vitali..within the rules and outside the rules... and couldn't get it done... Lennox is a punk... no heart.[/COLOR]

amayseng says:

vitali was putting it on him, no doubt, but lennix did stop him and pull through with the win..

he didnt rematch because he knew his time had come and gone. physically he was on the downslide...

you can be heated about it but no fighter in that ring at that level is a little bitch..

athletes get old....

Radam G says:

If GOAT Ali should have "lost nine or 10 fights," the K-bros/docs should have lost 20 to 30 for "holding and hitting." The K-bros/docs are greatest clinchers and hit-the-opponent-with-the-free-hand fighters in the history of the game.

If clinches were counted as punches are, the K-bros/docs would average per round: 16 punches landed, 25 clinches conducted. And ain't nothing wrong with clinching. It is a beautiful part of the game IMHO. But be like TSS reader DaveB and call a spade a spade. The K-bros/docs clinch so often that DaveG -- I mean B -- calls 'em "the Clinchko brothers." Hehehe! Holla!

mortcola says:

1. Wlad deserves to be judged on how he came back from adversity. More than any champ in history, he re-tooled his PSYCHE and his technique and hasn't lost a round.

2. Lennox Lewis got an INEXPERIENCED Vitali; turn it around, and fact is in his first big fight, Vitali manhandled Lewis until the cut, SURVIVED the bombs....and then learned how to rule a ring so thoroughly that our best can barely wualify as his sparring partners. Same with Wlad. Not their fault the era is weak. But case can be made that Cooney never would have laid a glove on Wlad, would have been lasered out of consciousness after a few of his straight-line bum-rushes; Ron Lyle might never have been very good at all, but had heart and put on a good show.

3. Peak Larry Holmes could dictate the action in the ring AND KO you TFO as well as anyone in the division.

4. The best of the past were little guys. Radam says it doesn't matter; I say it does. a 200 pound Joe Louis might have been a mediocrity against our best super heavies.

5. We have no good footage on the legends of the turn of the 20th century, with the exception that Dempsey was boxed silly by a Tunney who might have held the cruiser title for a few months, and Johnson clearly had good skills, but best ever? I don't think so. Calling

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Fitzsimmons the most skilled is nothing but imagination.

Radam G says:

Wow! Hehehe! Doc M-cola. Hollering about the K-bros/docs always brings you back shooting. Don't forget FitzSimmon was so superb that he was the first boxers to win three titles in different divisions. And his style of shift punching and right-shot crossing is being used today. And he is the pioneer of hooking off the jab. Plus he is the inventor of the five-punch combo. I subject that you do a bit of research on ole Bobby FitzSimmon. And there are films of him at middle, light heavy and heavy. He would beat da a biggums of nowadays like drums.

Your K-bros/docs woulda been tricked into an arse thrashing. Hahaha! Size is greatest exaggerated, especially in this day and time. Holla!

dino da vinci says:

@mort.

1. Wlad-- Ross Purity 24-13-1, brought in to be a victim, wins. Listed at 6'2"-6'3", in reality closer to 5'11".
2. Vitali-- Quit versus Chris Byrd, as opposed to run any risks w/shoulder injury.

Don't see the other guys ever losing to Ross (whom I like, as well as the K's) or quitting. Imagine having a huge lead and not trying to find a way to survive the last few rounds? Me either.

3. Really, really like Larry (Who I really don't like) against either brother.
4. Uh, no.
5. Taking people across an eight decade spread, do we get anything? 15-20 pounds? A few inches in height or reach? Access to steroids? Just sayin'

More important, who is the woman in your photo?

amayseng says:

good to see mort grace us with his insight, for real you need to swing by more often.

one troubling fact, very troubling, Vitali has a past of steroid use, admitted to it, therefore he cancels

himself out from the discussion of goat, he is tainted, we dont know where his natural and fair skill level

should legitimately be.

yes wlad has comeback very strong from early highlight knockouts, but to be in the discussion

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of the BEST

ever he cant be knocked the F out like that once, let alone i think 3 times...

my thought is the GOAT goes between Ali and the Rock.

a prime ali is the only one who could hold the rock off for a win and i would say 2/5 times rocky would get

to him and land a shot and put him out.

see the rock has one punch killing power, seriously KILLING power, one and your done.

ali at prime had the footwork and speed to stay away off the jab for a decision against him but if they fought

5 times i think the rock gets him twice at least....

mortcola says:

Good to be back! I always like to give the devil his due in nostalgia arguments. And I miss you guys.

OK re the K's. We will never know. But they have done some fine work.

I would like to see a good, small heavy master the game and show us how it used to be done. one thing it will do is add some evidence to the size-doesn't matter argument. GUys like Bryant Jennings show that small heavies can get it done.....but he started late and is never gonna be a master, just a solid, athletic winner. We haven't had one in decades.

The woman in the pic is my high school girlfriend on a photo shoot, adult pal, wife since '99. 50 and hasn't lost a thing. Seriously. See Cindy Crawford lately? Nostalgia? I don't think so.

The Doc

dino da vinci says:

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The Doc[/QUOTE]

There was an SNL skit where the cast had a police sketch artist doing facial composites, and every one of his sketches showed the suspect wearing a huge pair of sunglasses. I only mention this because I'm certain that if you had that photo enlarged into a 3'x6' poster and hung it in your home, 100 out of 100 of your friends would say 'Look, Mrs. Mortcola'.

If I hung the exact same photo in my home I'm equally certain 100 out of 100 of my friends would say, 'Look, is that Dino's wife?'

Please Note: I don't have a hundred friends. I have less. A lot less.

The only reason there would be hesidency on my people's part is, we've never put a picture of either of us on a wall. Ever.

They would be more like, 'Wow, that's a first!'

I will say this, I believe my wife to be the single most beautiful woman to ever live. (About 6' tall, completely off the charts in every category: Looks, intelligence, style, sense of humor, trustworthiness, loyalty, passion and on and on and on. And

That one photo, at that one angle. You can ask anyone in the fight game that has met her.

As the Brits say...

Spot on.

As I say...

Doc, you have tremendous taste as it applies to beauty.

Last note and one of extreme importance: as of this writing, mortcola has a photo of a world class beauty directly under his name. By some chance if he replaces it with a photo of a toad, please disregard this reply.

Radam G says:

Ditto, ddv! I was thinking the same thing. Hehehehe! Holla!

mortcola says:

OK. Here we all are today. Real world. At the half century mark.

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amayseng says:

[QUOTE=mortcola;35150]OK. Here we all are today. Real world. At the half century mark.[/QUOTE]

good pic , nice familia you have there!

mortcola says:

Gibola - props for a bold and beautiful observation. Very few fighters in history, at any weight, controlled the ring as well as a prime Larry Holmes, who could take you out with a laser of a right hand and set you up with a collection of variously timed jabs. I can see a 1980 Holmes outthinking and outfighting a prime Ali, and taking him cleanly on points.

BTW - whoever said those fine words about my love, that girl has been my standard bearer for 30 years. This pic is 25 years after the modeling shot. A few months ago. And she thinks everyone is hypnotized into believing she's pretty - no ego. Amazing girl. Funny thing is, the more I get back into boxing, the more she doesn't want to watch people hitting each other. But she advocates for me training for the masters and taking it as far as I want to, because she wants me to have no regrets. This pic is 25 years after the modeling shot.

mortcola says:

/Volumes/lomega HDD/iPhoto Library/Masters/2013/08/18/20130818-124242/IMG_0604.JPG

brownsugar says:

[QUOTE=mortcola;35153]/Volumes/lomega HDD/iPhoto Library/Masters/2013/08/18/20130818-124242/IMG_0604.JPG[/QUOTE]

Well done ...(the both of you) nothing more beautiful than a lasting relationship...I'm staying away from this thread though ... this topic is like the Bermuda triangle for me. Could get lost in it forever.

Appreciate the view pointmaybe not agree 100%...but how could we ever truly know? I'm sticking with Holmes..but can fully conceive the validity of whats being said about the alternate favorites.

mortcola says:

When I was trying to learn from my heroes, and not just doing what what my trainer said, it was Holmes, Curry, Hagler, and Arguello, in no particular order. Holmes was someone a young fighter at that time, and at this time, should learn from, through the magic of YouTube. All the things Wlad K does well, but "boringly", Holmes did like a dynamo, like an angry man who owned the ring and knew all the tricks and was ready to make you pay. The laser jab, the now you see me now you don't BAM of the master counterpuncher....

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spit bucket says:

Agreed on the skill level of Larry Holmes. Great chin and grit too as seen after getting floored by Shavers. If he had a more engaging personality he would have been a huge star. I think his jockstrap comment really hurt him as far as being liked by fans.

Radam G says:

YUP! The jockstrap comment did him in. Also, in my humble opinion, the young Cassius Clay and then Muhammad Ali of 1964 to 1967 would've done Larry Holmes in too. The GOAT Ali of 1970 to 1981, Larry, Larry so contrary could beat and did. But he wouldn't -- IMHO -- ever beat or even touch the 64-67 Clay/Ali Kid. Timing is everything. Sometimes you will have the BLING, BLING! Other times all the out-of-the-ring distractions, double standards, hatred and the likes will make you one weak ding-a-ling. Hehehehe! Muhammad Ali didn't "have nuffin' [sic] against 'em Viet Congs."

And that is the way the game goes, Larry got the weak ding-a-ling Ali. And Karma gave Iron Mike Tyson the weak ding-a-ling "couldn't wear my jockstrap" Holmes. And da double bytch karma gave Lennox Lewis the weak ding-a-ling used-up, rust-out "I'll eat your children" Iron MT.

Now who will get the weak ding-a-lings K-bros/docs? That division is so weak that may also be the strongest ding-a-lings. Holla!

Radam G says:

...For 20 more years. Holla!

mortcola says:

Interesting thing about whether the 1st generation GOAT Ali would have whipped Holmes is that THAT Ali never saw anyone with the physical skills of a prime Holmes. That was the best Ali. But it was an Ali who, controversial Liston wins aside, didn't fight the best opponents - irony in that

The Good Doctor says:

[QUOTE=mortcola;35195]Interesting thing about whether the 1st generation GOAT Ali would have whipped Holmes is that THAT Ali never saw anyone with the physical skills of a prime Holmes. That was the best [B]Ali. But it was an Ali who, controversial Liston wins aside, didn't fight the best opponents - irony in that[/QUOTE]
[B]

Interesting statement. I've heard a few people say this before. I am in recognition of the fact that just about every great boxer has a few formidable prime fighters that they missed throughout their career; maybe not to the extent of a Calzaghe or Mayweather (I think he will

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end up changing this) but missed a few. With that being said, who do you think that Ali should have fought that he didn't or fought considerably out of their prime?

Radam G says:

Actually the GOAT Ali of 1964-67 clean out the division except for rematching with Doug Jones, who the GOAT controversially beat early in his career. The GOAT even had a "Bum of the Month Club." The problem with the GOAT is that he didn't duck enough opponents before exile. Holla!

Radam G says:

Holmes was good, but you guys may be overhyping him. Dude was a serial ducker himself. And this is why he never was undisputed heavyweight champion of his time. Holla!

gibola says:

Great thread this, I tried to stay off but I can't! Agree the 66/67 Ali is a far greater challenge to Holmes than the 71-74 Ali. The speed, punch output and mobility of the 60s Ali would have been a real challenge. I see Holmes being more aggressive with the 60s Ali and trying to bully him, walking him down behind the jab and fighting at a pace that forces the 60s Ali into a defensive fight. Ali would move and flurry and be a tad quicker so it's a hell of a fight. Both are very busy, each may get stunned but not hurt, I still think Holmes wins on points but it's a tough call. Whereas I see Holmes outboxing the 70s Ali I think he has to outfight the 60s Ali to get the win.

Radam G says:

Larry [So Contrary] Holmes biggest problem is that he didn't move his big, ole size-eight cranium. I've seen Larry stopped and KAYOED on films a ton of times for not moving his heavyweight head. There are three ABC Wide-World of Sports amateur-boxing videos -- one on Youtube, where Larry got DQed by Daune Bobick -- of Larry getting that arse tapped.

There are sparring-session videos where the 71-75 [GOAT] beat the heck outta Holmes and stopped him a few times. Eventually these videos will be release by the owners. And there are also videos where 72-75 [late, great] great Smokin' Joe Frazier whupped up on Larry in sparring session and stopped him a few times for not moving that big-arse noggin.

Don't believe syet that I say. Like always, in a matter of time in the near future, I will be proven CORRECT, because the videos that I've mentioned up top will show up on Youtube and/or Daily Motion sooner before later.

Nothing under the sun can hide for long. Maybe just in plain sight like somebody I know quite well. Hehehehe! Holla!

The Good Doctor says:

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[QUOTE=Radam G;35227]Larry [So Contrary] Holmes biggest problem is that he didn't move his big, ole size-eight cranium. I've seen Larry stopped and KAYOED on films a ton of times for not moving his heavyweight head. There are three ABC Wide-World of Sports amateur-boxing videos -- one on Youtube, where Larry got DQed by Daune Bobick -- of Larry getting that arse tapped.

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I once met Larry at a local boxing night where he was signing autographs and even talked to several of the people at that event after the autograph signing. Myself, Larry and two of my friends were talking and I asked him what was the hardest he had ever been hit. He said there were two occasions. He said the first was when Ernie Shavers knocked him down in their fight. He said the second was was when he sparred with Joe Frazier. He said that Joe hit him so hard with a right cross that he felt like he had swallowed a beehive. I think he also mentioned how hard Frazier hit in a special about Ali as well.

Radam G says:

@TGD! And pundits say and said that the late, great, Smokin' Joe Frazier didn't have a right hand. I've always told them to ask his sparring partners Larry Holmes and Ken Norton. Eventually the sparring-session film is going to come out where Smokin' Joe stopped them both on the same. Poppa Joe could hit with either hand. He would hurt arse with a stabbing jab. Holla!

gibola says:

These tapes may well exist and are relevant but only to a degree - remember that's a prime-ish Frazier/Ali and a novice Holmes. The peak Holmes may well have done the same to a novice Frazier of 65/66 if Joe had turned up to spar the champ. I remember Holmes saying that by 1975 he felt quicker and stronger than Ali and could counter his jab fairly well in sparring. Great stuff guys - there are no answers only questions because Holmes' peak years come way after Ali and Frazier's - there is no crossover. Ali sparring the novice Holmes is only a tad more relevant than Holmes beating up the ancient Ali. We're talking peak on peak.

Radam G says:

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Novice is a far, far stretch. Less experience, YUP! But far from a novice. C'mon, MAN! I see that all the time. In the pros, an arse is getting whup and people make excuse that he is just a novice compare to the arse-whupper. Holla!

dino da vinci says:

[QUOTE=mortcola;35150]OK. Here we all are today. Real world. At the half century mark.[/QUOTE]

@mort. Just as I suspected. Beautiful woman, good for you Doc. And yes, a different look than my wife.

When I was a kid, I liked Joe Frazier and Muhammad Ali.

People would tell me: Which one?

Me: Which one, what?

People: Which one? You can't like both. It would be like liking the Red Sox and the Yankees.

Me: But I do like the Red Sox and the Yankees.

People: It would be like liking the Patriots and the Jets.

Me: Oh, I see your point.

I think the only one in the world who can appreciate my opinion is Frank Lotierzo, who I maintain has the best opinion in the fight game. Ali, Frazier? Both monsters.

By the way...speaking of monsters. I started using that term over 45 years ago to describe guys that could crack, and we're bulletproof. It's used a lot today, but I'd love to see it in print before I used it. Another one is gym rat as it applies to boxing. I reworked rink rat, a term I took from Derek Sanderson's autobiography. Not saying I invented it. Not saying I didn't.

Also, years ago people loved to quote boxing as the red light district of sports. I told every boxing writer who would listen, put that red light district thing to bed...it's the sweet science. Be positive.

It was first referred to the Sweet Science of Bruising, then later the great (and I mean GREAT) AJ Libling, for a time with the Providence Journal, had his monster seller, The Sweet Science. Now, you can hardly read an article in any major publication that when talking boxing, doesn't reference the term Sweet Science. As for Red Light District, when was the last time you heard it? Mission accomplished.

Radam G says:

American football and baseball are many times now called the red-light district of Sports and play. Maybe the fans, fanfaronades, fanboys and scribes have taken for granted that

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everybodee and dey know already know about boxing's red-lighting district. Holla!

amayseng says:

wanna hear something funny?

mlb has been testing for hgh for years now.

the nfl has yet to test for hgh at all

Coxs Corner says:

Joe Louis, thought of by most idiots as a two handed Max Baer but that is far from the truth. Yes he did knock out several fighters teeth with his punches and score some picturesque knockouts. But what made Joe Louis ahead of everyone else was his boxing skills. He applied subtle pressure and then took half steps back to draw his opponents into his power. He was an elite counter puncher. Fundamentally no one was better; chin down, hands up, elbows in he blocked, ducked, slipped and parried punches like a master. Yes he could get hit by right hands on occasion and he was dropped by some good punchers himself, but when you are trying to take your opponents head off with every meaningful punch you are vulnerable to be hit in return. But in all of the fights he was knocked down he was back up and in control of the fight before the round was over except in 2 fights. Forget all of the post WW2 fights anyway that is not the real Joe Louis who was dulled by 4 years of ring inactivity and never had the same explosiveness as the young Joe Louis. Prime Louis was 60-1 (51 ko's) before being forced to come back to pay a tax debt incurred by the IRS on purses he donated to the Army and Navy relief funds. It was criminal what they did to him, but that is another story. Suffice it to say that real defense is not hopping around the ring which is a waste of energy and takes a lot off ones punches, real defense is staying in punching range, blocking, ducking and countering and that is what Joe Louis did better than anyone.

I would also take George Foreman to destroy most of the heavyweights on this mentioned. I don't think anyone survives standing in front of him. A freak of nature physically with power to spare. The unbeaten George who came to seek and destroy cuts the ring on most of those who try to move and pounds them to submission in a few rounds. Ali had to absorb some pretty good body shots and was aided in pulling back by those loose ropes (I'm not suggesting they were loosened on purpose but watching the film its almost funny how loose they were, the heat really did a number on them). After losing the fight to Ali Foreman changed his style and tried to pace himself which gave him longevity when he came back at an old age but was simply not the real Foreman. Few remember that even Ali said in his autobiography that he could not fight in center ring against George "taking 6 steps to his opponents 3". Archie Moore and Dick Sadler had made George a master at cutting the ring on an opponent and I dont believe Holmes would have survived the Foreman of 73-74. He didn't pull back like Ali did and wouldnt have the loose ropes of Zaire to help him do so. Lennox or Vitaly either one couldnt keep a young George off them. Also I rank Lennox among the top 10 all time heavyweights but Vitaly's utter lack of competition keeps him out, not to say he couldnt beat some of the others but I always go back

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to the Sanders fight, he backed straight up, panicked when attacked and was winded in a few rounds when stressed. I would like to see him tested against a live opponent. But I haven't seen him fight one but Lennox Lewis and he was stopped in that fight.