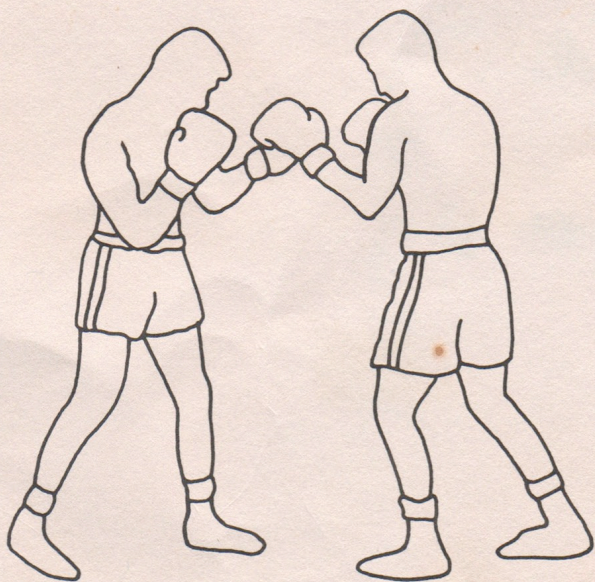


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**CHAMPIONSHIP**  
**BOXING™**  
**HISTORY OF BOXING**





# **THE HISTORY OF BOXING**

By Sierra On-Line, Inc.



The sport of boxing began in England during the early 1700s. Early fighters used their bare knuckles and had little use for rules or fair play. It was not unusual to see biting, kicking, and wrestling.

With the adoption of each new set of rules, boxing gradually became a more "civilized" sport. In 1865, England's Marquis of Queensbury devised a set of rules that gave us the modern form of boxing. Queensbury Rules required a ring, gloves, and 3 minute rounds. Dirty tricks and wrestling were forbidden, and a man could not be hit when he was down.

With the worldwide acceptance of the Queensbury rules, boxing became essentially the sport we know today.

In 1885 **John L. Sullivan**, "the Boston Strong Boy" captured the Queensbury World Heavyweight title to become the first of our modern champions. This popular and colorful figure had over 200 KOs to his credit. His reputation in the ring terrified many opponents. Once a boxer ran out of the ring before the fight was over -- Sullivan glared at the onlookers and shouted, "My name is John L. Sullivan! I can lick any son of a \*!?!% in the house! Who wants to take me up on that?" No one did.

When Sullivan met "**Gentleman Jim**" **Corbett** in 1892, the overweight Sullivan hadn't defended his title in three years. Credited with inventing the hook, Corbett was a dazzling fighter, a "scientific boxer" from San Francisco who relied on speed and defense instead of brute strength. The fight was a perfect example of the old technique of fighting versus the new. Sullivan was counted out in the 21st round -- it was his last fight.



In 1897, **Bob Fitzsimmons** met Corbett in Carson City, Nevada. The champion knocked "Fitz" down for a nine count in the 6th round, but "Fitz" got up again to bury one fist into Corbett's solar plexus and smash the other fist into his jaw for a knockout in the 14th round. Fitzsimmons popularized the saying, "The bigger they are, the harder they fall." This Englishman was the first to win the title in three weight divisions: middleweight, light-heavyweight and heavyweight.

In 1899 Fitzsimmons fought the large but slow **Jim Jefferies**. Thirteen years younger and fifty pounds heavier than the champ, Jefferies fought in a crouch position to protect himself from his faster opponent. In the fifth round, Fitzsimmons landed his devastating solar plexus punch but the burly Jefferies refused to fall. "Fitz" gave Jefferies everything he had, breaking Jefferies' nose and leaving cuts all over his face but the burly challenger just kept on coming. In the 11th round a powerful right sank into the champ's stomach followed by a crushing left hook to the jaw. Fitzsimmons hit the canvas and Jefferies took the title. He retired unbeaten in 1905.

When Jefferies retired, he named two men to fight for the crown. **Marvin Hart** won the fight, then lost the title in his first defense, to the Canadian **Tommy Burns**. At 5 feet 7 inches, Burns was the smallest Heavyweight Champion in history, but he had a long reach. After beating Hart, this fast, clever boxer defeated everyone in sight for two years.

In 1908, Burns met **Jack Johnson** in Sydney, Australia. Burns was beaten so badly by the 14th round that the police stopped the fight for a TKO. Possibly the best defensive fighter to wear the crown, Johnson was also the first black to win the title.

In 1915, **Jess Willard** beat the previously undefeated Johnson in a highly controversial fight. (Although Johnson was getting old and soft from high living, some reports say he "took a dive.") Willard defended his title successfully only once before losing it to Jack Dempsey.

Known as "the Manassa Mauler" and "Kid Blackie," **Jack Dempsey** was savage in the ring. He had "fists of cement" and the endurance and ability to back them up. The first fighter to draw a million dollar gate, Dempsey earned over 4 million dollars during his career. He held the title from 1919 to 1926, when he lost a decision to **Gene Tunney**, an up-and-coming fighter with great defense.

The rivalry between Dempsey and Tunney continued even after Tunney "the Fighting Marine," won the crown. They met again a year later, and it seemed for a time that Dempsey would regain the title. In the eighth round Dempsey flattened Tunney with a strong left hook. He then stood over Tunney until the referee led him to a neutral corner so the counting could begin. The delay of four seconds might have cost him the match, since Tunney remained on the mat until the count of 9. Tunney went on to win by a decision. The famous "long count" became one of the most discussed fights in history. Tunney retired undefeated in 1928.

The vacant crown was won by Germany's **Max Schmeling**, on a controversial foul by Jack Sharkey. The fight ended with Schmeling on the floor crying foul (probably the only time a title bout ended with the winner on the canvas). After the fight, Sharkey's manager made his oft-quoted comment, "We wuz robbed!" Schmeling avoided meeting Sharkey again, until 1932.

**Jack Sharkey** beat Schmeling in 1932, only to lose the title in 1933 to **Primo Carnera**. At 6 feet 6 inches, Primo was the largest heavyweight ever. In 1934 **Max Baer** met Carnera and floored him 12 times before the referee stopped the fight for a TKO.

An over-the-hill fighter named **Jim Braddock** took the title from Baer in 1935 in one of the biggest upsets in boxing history. He was to hold the title until 1937, when he met Joe Louis, the "Brown Bomber."

Considered by many boxing experts to be the best heavyweight champion that ever lived, **Joe Louis** had quick reflexes and tremendous power. His most famous fight was his rematch with Max



Schmeling in 1938. The German Nazi had beaten him once, and Louis felt he had let everyone down. When they met again in Yankee Stadium, President Roosevelt encouraged Louis to "beat Germany" and Hitler cabled best wishes to Schmeling.

Usually a slow starter, Louis flew out of his corner and tore into Schmeling with a flurry of blows. Schmeling hit the floor and the capacity crowd came out of their seats. The German went down three more times and finally Louis smashed into his solar plexus and followed up with a right that blasted Schmeling into the ropes. He hung there moaning, his pupils rolled up, eyes open with a glassy stare. The fight was over in 2 minutes and 40 seconds and Louis was a national hero. Louis ruled the heavyweight division for a record 11 years before retiring undefeated in 1949.

**Ezzard Charles** won the crown by defeating "Jersey Joe" Walcott after Louis retired.

"**Jersey Joe**" **Walcott**, whose real name was Arnold Cream, defeated Ezzard in a 1951 rematch to gain the title. At 37, he was the oldest man to win the championship. He actually retired 6 times before finally winning the title.

**Rocky Marciano** may have been the hardest hitter in the sport. To develop his strength and stamina, he would throw long passes with a football for about two hours per day and throw uppercuts while shoulder deep in water until he couldn't lift his arms. Rocky fought Walcott for the title in 1952. At the end of 12 rounds, Rocky was behind in points and needed a knockout to win. He threw a punishing left to Walcott's body but it was the tremendous short right to the jaw that ended the fight. In their rematch, Rocky knocked out Walcott in 2 minutes, 25 seconds.

Rocky defended his title for four years. He won 43 of his 49 fights by knockout, and was the only heavyweight champion never to have lost a professional fight.

After Marciano's retirement in 1956, **Floyd Patterson** KO'd an aging Archie Moore to take the crown. At 21, he was the youngest champion to hold the title. Patterson lost the title in 1959 to Ingemar Johansson.

Sweden's **Ingemar Johansson** put an end to America's domination of the heavyweight crown in 1959. His "Hammer of Thor" punch sent Patterson to the canvas seven times before the referee stopped the fight for a TKO.

Patterson regained the title in 1960 and held it until 1962, becoming the first fighter to retake the title after losing it.

In 1962 Patterson was knocked out in the first round by **Sonny Liston**, an ex-con who learned to fight in prison. Sonny's record and criminal associates made him unpopular with the fans. In 1964 Liston met a young fighter from Kentucky named Cassius Clay.

**Cassius Clay** won the gold medal in the light-heavyweight division at the 1960 Olympic Games, at age 18. After the Olympics, Clay turned pro. Clay had a very "vocal" style that caused serious boxing fans to discount him. Clay wasn't expected to last many rounds with the powerful Liston -- the odds were 10 to one in favor of the champion.

Once in the ring, Clay's show-off manner disappeared and he demolished Liston in 6 rounds. At the start of the 7th, Liston refused to leave his corner.

After winning the championship, Clay announced he had been converted to the Black Muslim religion and changed his name to **Muhammad Ali**. Ali, also known as "the Greatest" (his own title) and the "Louisville Lip," held one or both titles (World Boxing Association and World Boxing Council) during three periods: 1964-1970, 1974-1978 and 1978-1979.

In 1965 the World Boxing Association (WBA) wanted Ali to fight **Ernie Terrell**. When Ali refused, the WBA declared Terrell to be the



new champion. (Ali still held the WBC title.) This is the first time the World Heavyweight Championship title was split between two boxers. However, since Terrell hadn't "earned" the title and was only recognized by the WBA, most people still considered Ali to be the world champion. In 1967 Ali met Terrell and won a lopsided decision (13 to 2), proving to everyone who the real champion was.

The WBA again stripped Ali of the title later that same year when he was indicted for draft evasion. To choose the new champion, the WBA decided to stage an elimination tournament. Olympic Gold Medalist Joe Frazier, then rated #1 by the WBA, refused to participate. The WBA dropped him to #9 and named the tournament winner, **Jimmy Ellis**, the new WBA champ. Once Muhammad Ali's sparring partner, Ellis was a good boxer with an average punch. He held the title from 1968 to 1970, when he met Joe Frazier.

**"Smokin' Joe" Frazier** (so named because he usually left his corner fast and hard at the start of a round) took the WBA crown from Ellis in five rounds, but it wasn't until he met Ali in the "Fight of the Century" that he really made his name. The fights he had with Ali are considered to be some of the best fights ever.

Ali and Frazier met for the first time in 1970, and Frazier won by a TKO in the 5th. Ali was extremely dissatisfied with the result of the match, and continued to claim world championship. And in fact, Ali was still recognized as champ in many parts of the world.

Their first rematch was labeled the "Fight of the Century" and Ali was favored to win. Frazier was tough and a fierce puncher, but small. Ali was graceful and fast with popping blows that wore his opponents out. It was an exciting fight. Both fighters delivered and received terrific blows and by the 14th round they were both tired. At the start of the 15th, Joe came out smokin' and caught Ali with his famous left hook. Ali went down. Although he managed to get up, Frazier won the fight on points. It was one of the few times Ali was knocked down in a fight.

Frazier held the WBC and WBA titles until he met another Olympic Gold Medalist, George Foreman, in 1973.

**George Foreman** surprised everyone by knocking Frazier down six times before the referee stopped the fight in the second round for a TKO. Foreman was big and strong and his fights seldom went more than 4 or 5 rounds. This worked to his advantage since he lacked the endurance to go the distance. He liked to trade punches with his opponent and had trouble with "scientific" boxers who wouldn't stand still and trade punches with him.

Foreman met Muhammad Ali in a much-publicized bout in Zaire, Africa in 1974. The fight was televised by satellite to over a billion viewers around the world. The odds were 3 to 1 against Ali, who was now 32. In the first round of this "Rumble in the Jungle," Ali was driven to the ropes. Ali let Foreman whale away, absorbing the blows on his rock-hard muscles. While Foreman wore himself out, Ali peppered blows to Foreman's face. Ali taunted his opponent, "You're getting tired, George." And he was right. In the 8th round, Ali switched from defense to offense and went in for the kill. Foreman toppled to the canvas. Ali had proven himself under the toughest of conditions and became the second fighter in history (Floyd Patterson was the first) to win the title back after losing it.

When a fighter holds both the WBC and WBA titles, he must fight the #1 contender from each division every year or risk being stripped of the title. In 1978, Ali had beaten the #1 WBA contender and decided to fight an inexperienced boxer before meeting the #1 WBC contender. In a shocking upset, **Leon Spinks** beat Muhammad Ali to capture the WBA and WBC titles. Spinks was stripped of his WBC title when he refused to fight the #1 WBC contender, Ken Norton. Instead, he wanted an immediate rematch with Ali (which would bring more money). Ali beat Spinks in the rematch, becoming the only heavyweight to win the title three times.

The WBC stripped Spinks of his WBA title in 1978, they awarded the



crown to **Ken Norton**. He lost the title that same year to **Larry Holmes** in a split decision.

Although Holmes wasn't a devastating puncher, he had one of the best left jabs of any Heavyweight Champion. Holmes was equally adept at offense and defense. He defeated a long list of challengers in defense of his WBC title before resigning his title in December of 1983.

**Greg Page** (the #1 WBC contender) and **Tim Witherspoon** (the #2 WBC contender) fought in March of 1984 for the vacant crown. Page spent most of the fight against the ropes and Witherspoon, a lethal puncher, won in a split decision to capture the title and become the current WBC champion.

When Ali resigned his WBA title in 1979, the WBA held a tournament to determine the new champion. **John Tate** beat Gerrie Coetzee in a fifteen round decision to win the title.

In 1980, Tate met **Mike Weaver**. Although Tate dominated the fight until the last thirty seconds of the final round, Weaver landed a lucky punch to knock Tate out and become the WBA champ.

Weaver held the WBA title until he met **Michael Dokes** in 1982. Dokes pounded on the slower Weaver. The referee stopped the fight 63 seconds after it started with Weaver still standing. Many people thought it was stopped too soon and the WBA ordered an immediate rematch. This one went 15 rounds and ended in a draw. In a draw, the champion retains the title.

In September of 1983, Dokes met a South African fighter named **Gerrie Coetzee**. He knocked Dokes down in the fifth round and then hurt Dokes badly in the 10th round with two consecutive shots to the head with his powerful right hand. Dokes tried to hold on but landed on the canvas, face down, and was counted out 8 seconds after the bell rang ending the round. It was Dokes' first loss.

Coetzee, the current WBA champ as of April 1984, is the first white

to win a heavyweight title since Johansson of Sweden beat Patterson in 1959.

### THE CONTENDERS

The current contenders for the WBA and WBC titles are generally young men who are still developing their skills. Abilities and traits that may become apparent later in their careers have not surfaced yet.

**Greg Page** is a quick boxer with good defense and an outstanding jab. He has power and endurance but he tends to come into the ring 5 to 15 pounds over his best weight. Page is not a consistent fighter. At his best he can be as tough as any contender; other times he seems listless.

**"Gentleman Gerry" Cooney** is a hard hitter, especially with his left hand. He has good stamina but allows himself to get hit too often. He has had problems with broken knuckles.

**Renaldo Snipes** was an unknown until Holmes gave him a shot at the title. His overhand right very nearly put Holmes out. Snipes bobs and weaves when he fights, and has good defense. He has a good left hook but his punches can be very wild.

**Pinklon "Pinky" Thomas** is a slugger with power in both hands, but especially his right.

**Marvis "Little Smoke" Frazier** is a high energy fighter who chases his opponent around the ring. His small size could be his greatest drawback.

**Tex Cobb** can absorb terrific punishment. Since he doesn't have a hard enough punch to put many opponents out, his usual strategy is to wear his opponents out by letting them pound on him.

**James "Broad Axe" Broad** has a very powerful left jab but he has problems keeping his weight down.



### POPULAR FIGHTERS FROM OTHER WEIGHT DIVISIONS

There are twelve divisions in boxing competition. A boxer's classification is determined by his weight. Any boxer may fight in a higher division than his weight dictates, but may not fight in a lower division.

Heavyweight (over 175 lbs.)  
Light Heavyweight (under 175 lbs.)  
Middleweight (under 160 lbs.)  
Junior Middleweight (under 154 lbs.)  
Welterweight (under 147 lbs.)  
Junior Welterweight (under 140 lbs.)  
Lightweight (under 135 lbs.)  
Junior Lightweight (under 130 lbs.)  
Featherweight (under 126 lbs.)  
Junior Featherweight (under 122 lbs.)  
Bantamweight (under 118 lbs.)  
Flyweight (under 112 lbs.)

**"Marvelous Marvin" Hagler** is considered by many to be the best boxer currently fighting. He holds the WBA and WBC Middleweight Championships.

**Roberto Duran** dominated the lightweight division from 1973 until 1980 when he beat "Sugar Ray" Leonard for the Welterweight title, losing it that same year in a rematch with Leonard. Currently he holds the WBA Junior Welterweight title.

A hard puncher, **Thomas Hearns** knocked out his first 17 opponents. He nearly beat "Sugar Ray" Leonard when they met in 1981 -- he was ahead on all three scorecards when Leonard battered him into a corner prompting the referee to stop the fight. Hearns holds the WBC Junior Middleweight title.

**Wilfred Benitez** is a natural boxer who rarely trains for more than two weeks before a fight. This former Junior Middleweight Champion has a non-aggressive, counter-punching style that is sometimes boring to watch.

**"Sugar Ray" Leonard** is one of the most popular and colorful boxers. This Welterweight retired from boxing in 1982 because of a detached retina but announced a year later that he would fight again.

**Donald Curry** is a fast, hard-hitting young fighter. He holds the current WBA Welterweight title.

**Milton McCrory** holds the WBC Welterweight title.

**Aaron Pryor** has the highest knockout percentage of any active boxer. Recently retired, he held the Junior Welterweight Championship.

**Alexis Arguello** knocked out Ray Mancini in 1981 but was knocked out by Aaron Pryor the following year. This Junior Welterweight has since returned to his native Nicaragua to fight in the civil war there.

**Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini** is an exciting fighter who has only lost one fight. He holds the current WBA Lightweight title.

**Hector "Macho" Camacho** learned to fight in the streets of Spanish Harlem, beating up on kids bigger than himself. He is perhaps the fastest man in boxing today, and is as colorful outside the ring as he is in the ring. Camacho holds the WBC Junior Lightweight Championship.

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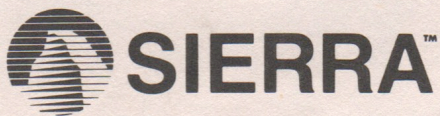


### **THE BOXING HALL OF FAME**

Opinions as to the skill and strength of individual boxers may vary; however, these outstanding fighters are our choices for the ten best Heavyweight Champions ever to set foot on the canvas.

John L. Sullivan  
"Gentleman Jim" Corbett  
Jack Johnson  
Jack Dempsey  
Gene Tunney  
Joe Louis  
Rocky Marciano  
Muhammad Ali  
"Smokin' Joe" Frazier  
George Foreman





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