

FLOOEY

Hooray! He Finally Gets a Fight for His White Hope

By Vic



Inside the Ring with the Great Fighters by Charley White.

Old-Time Featherweight Battles Under London Prize Ring Rules and the Introduction of Marquis of Queensberry Regulations in America Discussed by Famous Referee in This Chapter.

No. 2 - Featherweight Division.

FROM the time that Charles Lynch went over to England and was defeated by George Holden, who became the first featherweight champion of the world under London prize ring rules in that battle, no American featherweight, as far as I have been able to find, crossed the Atlantic to pit his skill against that of the Englishmen until little George Dixon went over to London in 1890 and defeated Nunc Wallace there in eighteen rounds on June 27.

The first American featherweight champion under London rules was Dick Hollywood of New York, who gained the title by defeating Johnny Keating of Jersey City at Longbeach, Canada, along about 1863, for a purse of \$1,000 a side. It was a very hard battle, lasting many rounds, and was ended by Keating breaking his arm.

Later on when Marquis of Queensberry rules began to come in a great many fighters still stuck to the old London rules. Even late as Jack Dempsey's time, contests were fought under these rules. Jack himself and Brooklyn Jimmy Carroll were experts in them. Among the men who were prominent in the lighter weights along the 70s and the 80s were George Siddons of Philadelphia, Barney Aaron, Billy Edwards, John Clarke of Philadelphia, Arthur Chambers and many others. All these men could trade blows to the featherweight limit if necessary, but many of their battles were fought around 125 pounds. There were also Tim Collins of New York and Patsy Shepard of England.

The first featherweight fight under Marquis of Queensberry rules in New York City took place about 1890. A little later, when boxing became more popular in America, and particularly along the Atlantic seaboard, most of the battles were pulled off in the sporting houses and dance halls, where a ring was generally to be found in the rear of the room. Famous among these places were the ones kept by Owen Geoghegan on the Bowery, between Grand and Hester streets, and known as "The Old Place at Home," Harry Hill's place up on Houston street, and the one kept by Matt Grace on the Bowery near Spring street. Grace had formerly been a collar and elbow champion, while Geoghegan had been a lightweight fighter of repute.

**Plenty of 'Em Then.**  
Billy Madden also used to keep a place up on Thirteenth street, and "The Allen" held forth down on Bleecker street. Owen Geoghegan's place had two rings, one upstairs and one downstairs. Later on Harry Hill went over to East New York and for many years kept a place near the Long Island Railroad station there. Billy McGilroy also had a sporting house on the Bowery. The big hall there was used mostly as a ballroom, and the fighters used to spar there in the middle of the floor. Oldtimers will remember the boys who used to spar at these halls and go from one to another—Steve Taylor, John Sanders, Harry Hill's two boys, Dick and Billy, Butt Riley, Johnny Dwyer, Ed Tuohy, Cocky Turnbull, Pat Kelly of Brooklyn, noted as one of the strongest men in the country, "Jack" Langtry, who weighed 26 pounds, Tommy Green, Dan Dougherty, Barney Aaron, Billy Edwards, Siddons Mouse, Teddy McCauley, Mike Costello, Donny Harris, George Rooke and Pete McCoy, Joe Goss, Tommy Forrest, "Batt" Mallin, Ned O'Baldwin, the "Irish Giant" Mike O'Leary, "Fiddler" Neary, Billy Dacey—the list could be prolonged indefinitely. Of course, a lot of these boys were not lightweights. They were all sizes and weights, and each was a well known character in his day.

The fights were usually pulled off when a crowd of sports came around and wanted to be entertained. After the bout the hat was passed around and the fighters generally would get about

\$10 for the winner and \$5 for the loser, although sometimes their winnings were much more.

Along about this time Geoghegan began to import fighters from England. The first featherweight he brought over was Joe Fowler. Fowler had won the featherweight championship of England under the old London rules and had lost the title to Tom Barnes of Birmingham under Marquis of Queensberry rules. Fowler came over here with other English fighters of different weights and worked for Geoghegan, fighting in the ring at night and doing the water or bouncer act during the day. Later on Geoghegan brought over Barnes, the man who had conquered Fowler. Both men met and boxed with all the New York fighters of their weight, most of whom they bested. Some others were Paddy Lee, champion lightweight of England; "Badger" Crutchley and Tom Henry.

Original Kid McCoy.

In order to offset the popularity of the English fighters, Matt Grace began to look around for a rattling good man. He picked on Charles McCoy of Philadelphia, the original "Kid." McCoy had joined the United States Navy when a youth. He had beaten everything in the navy around \$6 or 100 pounds, and when he left the service and went back to Philadelphia he became a protégé of Prof. John Clarke and trimmed all the boys around Philadelphia, winning the amateur featherweight championship of America.

McCoy's fighting weight was from 105 to 115 pounds, and he was a terrific fighter. He came over to New York and went to work for Matt Grace. He boxed with Harry Street, Frank Williams and "Lot" White. He fought Charley Norton over in Newark and for a week met all comers in Hoboken. He met Fowler in a six-round bout, and had a shade the best of him. Later on he fought six rounds with Barnes and also had a shade on him.

Most of these fights were contested under Marquis of Queensberry rules with small gloves. McCoy could not stand the disipation of the Bowery and went back home, where he died of consumption a few years later.

A now man out in the Middle West now became prominent in the featherweight class. This was Tommy Warren of Louisville, who had defeated a number of good men throughout the Mississippi Valley. Warren was claiming the championship of America, and a match was made between Barnes and

Warren, which took place near Louisville, Kentucky. This was to be for the featherweight championship of the world. The fight took place in 1888, and went forty rounds to a draw, at the end of which time both men were too exhausted to continue the fight. This was the first featherweight contest for the championship of the world held in America under Marquis of Queensberry rules.

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