

Boxers in Bare Knuckle Days Often Fought Their Championship Bouts in Rings Fitted on Turf or Snow

TOM HYER WAS A TERRIFIC HITTER Rivals Refused to Meet America's First Heavyweight Champion.

HEENAN GREAT FIGHTER Lavigne First Boxer to Bring a World's Title to American Soil.

By CHARLES F. MATHESON. It's a far cry to the days when boxers fought with bare fists and the ring was pitched on the turf or snow in some lonely spot in the woods.

It's a long time since Tom Hyer, a native born American, won the heavyweight championship of this country by defeating George McClellan, better known as "Old Bull Terrier," in the battle which took place at Caldwell's Landing, N. Y., on September 9, 1841, and lasted 101 rounds, or 2 hours and 55 minutes.

Although Hyer won this battle, it is known to be a terrific punishment. Yankee Sullivan, after thinking the matter over for eight years, made a match with the champion, and was beaten in sixteen rounds, or 1 1/2 minutes, 12 seconds at Rocky Point, Md., January 10, 1849.

Hyer was so terribly beaten he was removed to a hospital.

The hitting power shown by Hyer in the combat scared off his other rivals and Hyer retired because he could not get any one to meet him in the ring.

Heenan Another Old Timer. Lifting again the curtain of the past here is revealed the tall figure of John C. Heenan, who was known as the "John Bull" because he lived at Baneca, Cal., although he was born at Watertown, N. Y., May 2, 1825.

That appears the stout form of Jim McGovern, who was known as the "Big Boy" because he was the world's champion who retired undefeated and never returned to the ring.

Jeffries was world's champion when he retired, but he made the mistake of coming to the ring and secured a humiliating defeat.

Championship Belts the Fad. In the days of Mace championship belts and medals were quite the fad, and the accompanying pomp and circumstance shown him basking in the reluctant gleams of his trophies.

Few of the bare knuckle warriors are yet alive. Mike Donovan, who was the world's champion, is still in the flesh, but the majority of the old time fighters have been counted out by the inexorable referee's time.

The many days of champions of titles in the early days of the ring were foreign born. It is a fact that the best performers in the heavyweight class were native Americans.

Not much attention was paid to the lighter classes in the days of London, and the English have since made the lightest classes become of interest and were clearly defined.

It was not until the arrival of George Dixon and Terry McGovern in the bantam class, and later into the featherweight division; until Joe Gans and Kid Lavigne appeared in the lightweight class, and the Saginaw Kid brought the world's title of the class to America by stopping Dick Burge in London, in sixteen rounds, that Jack Dempsey, Tommy Ryan, Bob Fitzsimmons and Stanley Ketchel made the middleweight class famous, that the championships in the lighter classes became of interest and were clearly defined.

McGovern Strong at 118 Pounds. In the case of McGovern O'Rourke thought it would weaken the Brooklyn boy to make 118 pounds and for that reason alone named that poundage for the bout.

McGovern held the title until November 28, 1901, when he was knocked out in the second round by Young Corbett at Hottel, Conn., the weight being 126 pounds.

When Corbett was graduated into the heavyweight class, Abe Attell claimed the title and was successful on October 13, 1904, when Brooklyn Tommy Sullivan won the title by knocking out Attell in the fifth round at Longwood, Conn.

Attell retained the title by stopping Sullivan at San Francisco in four rounds, on February 22, 1912, at Los Angeles. Jimmy McGovern was the first American to have held the championship for six years, when Mike Donovan took it.

The list of champions and the number of years which each held title follows:

Period Years. George Dixon 1892-1895 4. Dave Sullivan 1895-1898 3 mos. Young Corbett 1898-1901 3 mos. Young Corbett going into featherweight 1898-1901 3 mos. Jimmy Barry 1894-1898 4. Terry McGovern, claimant 1899-1901 2 mos. McGovern going into featherweight 1899-1901 2 mos. Harry Forbes 1901-1903 2. Frankie Neil 1903-1905 2. Johnny Coulon 1905-1914 9. Kid Williams 1914-1917 3. Retired undefeated.

Featherweight Class. A large number of boxers aspired to the featherweight championship of America in the late '90s, the limit of the class in those days being placed at 115 pounds. The chief contenders were like Weir of Ireland, Billy Murphy of Australia and Johnny Griffin of Braintree, Mass., but none gained any decided advantage or clinched his claim to the title.

So far as Weir and Murphy were concerned they had no right to contend for the American title, as neither remained in America permanently or gave any evidence of desiring to become citizens. George Dixon and Cal McCarthy of Troy then loomed up as the leading contenders, and Dixon won the world's title by knocking out Walter Croot in London, December 6, 1897, in the twentieth round. Croot dying from the effects of the beating he received.

Barry retired undefeated in 1899 and Terry McGovern claimed the title. McGovern won the world's title by stopping Podlar Palmer, England, in a twenty-round bout by Young Corbett on September 13, 1899. The weight agreed on was 118 pounds, but as it rained on the day set for the bout and the boxers did not wish to risk their lives the chances are the weight was 118.

McGovern went into the featherweight class in 1900 and Harry Forbes claimed the title by stopping Young Corbett in London, December 24, 1905, at 118 pounds, and the result was a draw. Walsh retired and Johnny Coulon of Chicago claimed the title in 1910.

Bill Williams knocked out Coulon in 1914 in three rounds at 116 pounds, and Williams had previously knocked out Coulon in the championship of Europe. The world's title was again in America. Johnny Eric claimed the title by reason of an alleged foul in a decision over the Williams at St. Paul on September 19, 1915, but consensu of opinion of boxing experts of America gathered by the New York Press failed to sustain Eric's claim and was not recognized.

Williams at New Orleans in the winter of 1917 in a twenty round bout at 118 pounds.

The list of champions and their terms of service follow:

THEY MADE RING HISTORY



James J. Corbett America's Cleverest Heavyweight Boxer

Only World's Heavyweight Champion who retired undefeated

thick except the credit of defeating Dixon.

Smith then made a match with Dave Sullivan, which was won at Coney Island September 26, 1898, Smith breaking his arm and being compelled to quit in the fourth round.

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BOXING LEADERS IN ALL CLASSES

WORLD'S CHAMPIONS—1918. Flyweight, 112 Pounds—Jimmy Wilde, Pottysprid, Wales.

Bantam, 118 Pounds—Pete Herman, New Orleans, La. Featherweight, 126 Pounds—Johnnie Kilbane, Cleveland, Ohio.

Lightweight, 135 Pounds—Benny Leonard, New York. Welter, 145 Pounds—Kid Lewis of New York. Middleweight, 160 Pounds—Mike O'Dowd, St. Paul.

Light Heavyweight, 175 Pounds—No incumbent; open to competition. Heavyweight—Jess Willard, Pottawatomie county, Kansas.

AMERICAN CHAMPIONS—1918. Flyweight—No incumbent; open to competition. Bantam, 118 Pounds—Pete Herman, New Orleans.

Feather, 122 Pounds—Johnnie Kilbane, Cleveland, Ohio. Lightweight, 135 Pounds—Benny Leonard, New York.

Welter, 145 Pounds—Kid Lewis of New York. Middleweight, 160 Pounds—Mike O'Dowd, St. Paul. Light Heavyweight, 175 Pounds—Batting Levinsky, Stamford, Conn.

Heavyweight—Jess Willard, Pottawatomie county, Kansas.

By getting Gans in the ring at an unfair weight condition, the champion became the favorite of the public, and he showed, making his actual weight 131 1/2 pounds ringside, Nelson managed to stop Gans in the seventh round July 19, 1890.

By way of good measure, Gans knocked out Britt in the sixth round September 9, 1890.

Britt won from both Lavigne and Ernie after they had lost their titles, and the claim of Britt to championship honors is utterly unfounded.

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By getting Ryan in the eighteenth round at Maspeth March 2, 1918. This was the first time since the death of the world's champion, John J. Sullivan, that he would not meet with any resistance, and in consequence the champion neglected to train.

Smith Defends Title. Both McCoy and Ryan entered the middleweight division the following year and Smith claimed and defended the world title for several years.

Rube Ferns took the title from Smith on a foul in the twentieth round of a bout at Buffalo January 15, 1900.

Dixie Kid won the title from Walcott in the twentieth round of a bout at San Francisco April 30, 1904.

Dixie Kid held title until 1908, when he was stopped by Tom Ryan, who had since returned to England, where he has since remained. Thus the championship lapsed and was open to general competition.

Jack Britton held the title and the world's title for two years, Jack Britton over Walcott in the twentieth round of a bout at New York City April 24, 1916.

The assertion has been made that Honey Melody won the title from Walcott in the twentieth round of a bout at New York City April 24, 1916.

Other erroneous statements are that Mike Twin Sullivan won title by beating Honey Melody, who never was a champion.

The writer title was also conferred on Charley and Ray Bronson, though neither ever acquired it.

The list of titlholders to date follows:

Period Years. Paddy Duffy of Boston 1892-1894 3. Tom Ryan 1894-1896 2. Tom Ryan 1896-1898 2. Tom Ryan 1898-1900 2. Tom Ryan 1900-1902 2. Tom Ryan 1902-1904 2. Tom Ryan 1904-1906 2. Tom Ryan 1906-1908 2. Tom Ryan 1908-1910 2. Tom Ryan 1910-1912 2. Tom Ryan 1912-1914 2. Tom Ryan 1914-1916 2. Tom Ryan 1916-1918 2.

By way of good measure, Klaus beat Moran and Bob Melody in the middleweight class, who stood next to the champion of that country, Carpenter.

Klaus next took on Billy Pappas at Paris, France, and stopped the Thunderbolt in fifteen rounds.

These wonderful performances by Klaus made him indubitably the middleweight champion of the world.

By an ironical turn of fate the new champion returned to his home town of Pittsburgh and was knocked out twice by George Egan in the first and second rounds of a twenty round bout on October 11, 1913, and the second time in five rounds on December 22, 1913.

Chip defied the title and when McGovern was defeated by the champion of the Brooklyn Sporting Club and knocked out in the first round in 1914 by George Egan.

The champion of the world in which they held their title follows:

Period Years. Mike O'Dowd 1892-1894 3. Mike O'Dowd 1894-1896 2. Mike O'Dowd 1896-1898 2. Mike O'Dowd 1898-1900 2. Mike O'Dowd 1900-1902 2. Mike O'Dowd 1902-1904 2. Mike O'Dowd 1904-1906 2. Mike O'Dowd 1906-1908 2. Mike O'Dowd 1908-1910 2. Mike O'Dowd 1910-1912 2. Mike O'Dowd 1912-1914 2. Mike O'Dowd 1914-1916 2. Mike O'Dowd 1916-1918 2.

Light Heavyweight Class. George Gardner, a native of County Clare, Ireland, seems to have been the first to lay claim to the light heavyweight title in Chicago. The contest was generally accepted as 175 pounds, Gardner, who settled in Boston, on his arrival here, began fighting in 1897.

Gardner lost title to Peter Sanchez in a twenty round bout at San Francisco November 25, 1905, in a twenty round bout. Fitz getting the decision on points.

Fitz held the title till December 20, 1908, when he was put to sleep in the thirteenth round by Philadelphia Jack O'Brien.

The title seems to have lapsed thereafter, as it was apparently abandoned in care much for the honor of the city.

In 1916 Jack Dillon, then at the top of his form and winning consistently, laid claim to the title. He was disputed by Batting Levinsky in a twenty round bout at Kansas City April 25, 1916, Dillon winning on points at the end of a fifteen round bout to a decision.

But Dillon did not retain his honors for any length of time, for in a second meeting between the pair October 21, 1916, at Boston Levinsky was victorious in a twelve round bout to a decision. Levinsky has not lost to a referee's decision, although Mike has had the better of sectionless bouts with the champion.

Light Heavyweight Class. Name. Tenure of title. Yrs. George Gardner 1897-1905 8. Peter Sanchez 1905-1908 3. Jack O'Brien 1908-1910 2. Jack O'Brien 1910-1912 2. Jack O'Brien 1912-1914 2. Jack O'Brien 1914-1916 2. Jack O'Brien 1916-1918 2.

Heavyweight Class. With the exception of Tom Hyer, America's first titleholder in the heavyweight class, and John C. Heenan, Battery to Macomb's Dam Park, 12 miles.

BOXERS WANTED IN WESTERNERS PROVE BEST TRAPSHOOTERS

Rev. Wedge, Once a Pugilist, Now Athletic Coach at Camp Grant.

That trapshooters are becoming more proficient each year is evidenced by the remarkable number of long runs made. Records compiled of the runs of 50 straight or better in 1917 show there were 2,829 runs between 50 and 74, 691 runs between 75 and 99 and 825 runs over 100, a total of 3,845 runs of 50 or better.

The quality of the shooters appears to improve with quantity, for there are more devotees of the "sport alluring" each year. There were more men and women at the traps in 1917 than in any other year and the scores were better. Some of the performances were remarkable. The shooting far surpassed that of 1916.

The best run of the year was made by an amateur, Frank Troch of Vancouver, Wash., the 1918 Washington State and national amateur champion. He broke 284 straight at Seattle, Wash., April 29-30.

Poston Beat "Pro." The longest run of the year by a professional was 261, by Hugh Poston of Los Angeles. Poston had run 224 at the Pacific Coast handicap at San Jose. The best amateur run of the 1916 season was 243, by Fred Plum of Atlantic City, N. J., and was made at Maplewood, N. J.

There were only four runs over 200 in 1916, two by amateurs and two by professionals. This was greatly exceeded in 1917. Washington's highest run was 243, by Fred Plum of Atlantic City, N. J., and was made at Maplewood, N. J.

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