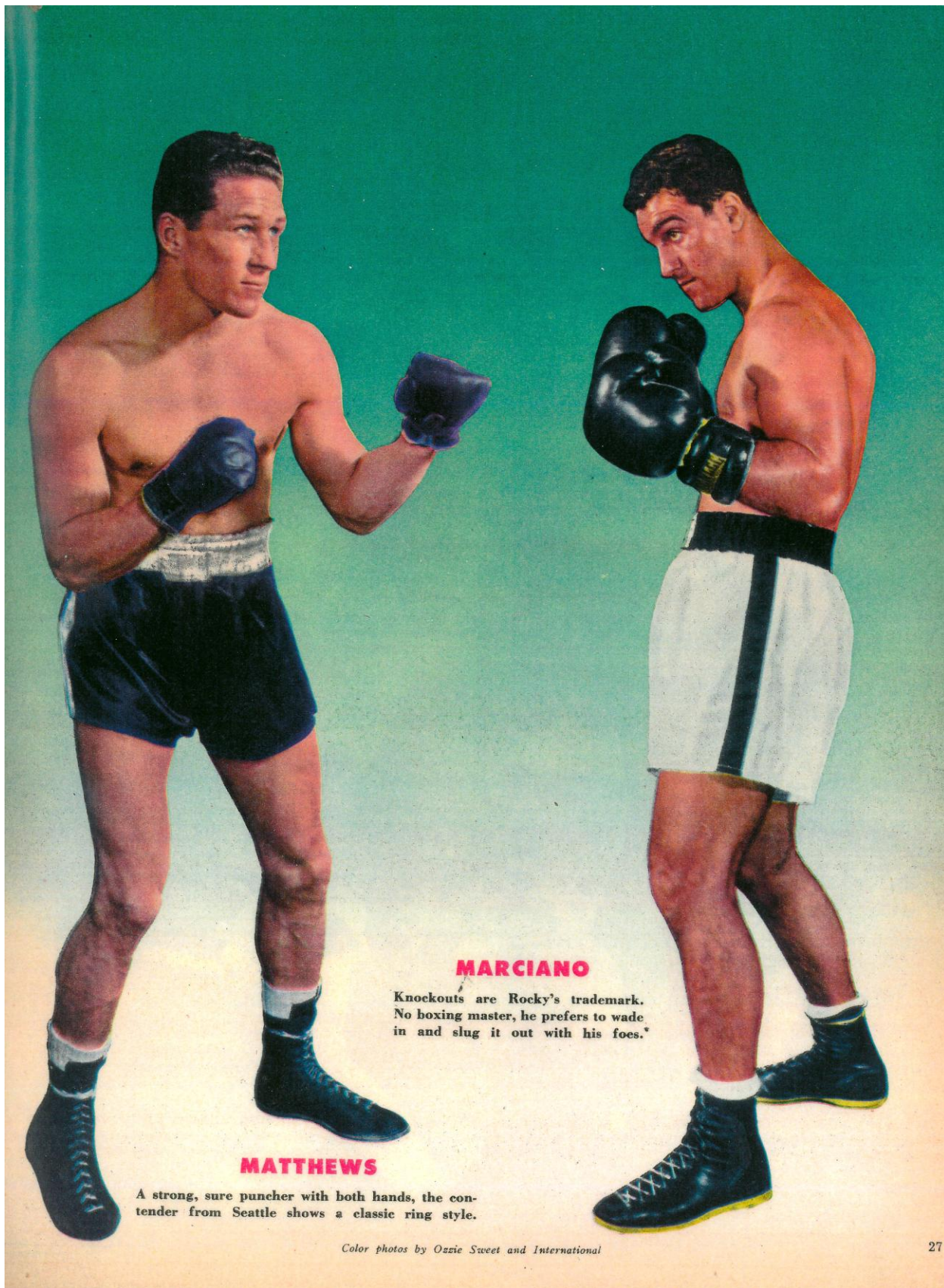


MY DREAM MATCH: MATTHEWS VS. MARCIANO

BY LESTER BROMBERG



MARCIANO

Knockouts are Rocky's trademark. No boxing master, he prefers to wade in and slug it out with his foes.*

MATTHEWS

A strong, sure puncher with both hands, the contender from Seattle shows a classic ring style.

Color photos by Ozzie Sweet and International

MY DREAM MATCH: MATTHEWS VS. MARCIANO

Some day these two, the hottest fighters in the ring today, may actually meet. If they do, it will be Tunney and Dempsey over again

BY LESTER BROMBERG



EDITORS' NOTE: Like boxing fans everywhere, we enjoy the game of amateur matchmaking. We like to argue about fights which, for some reason or other, have never been fought and possibly never will be. Discussing some of these make-believe matches with Lester Bromberg, the noted boxing writer and commentator, we asked him for his choice as the most exciting, most natural bout that could be made among today's fighters. The following article is the result; this is his dream match for 1952. Now, don't forget, Lester made it all up.

THEY meet tonight in the match the nation said couldn't be made. Rocky Marciano, the Brockton, Massachusetts, heavy-weight with a sledgehammer punch, vs. Harry (Kid) Matthews, the Seattle, Washington, sharpshooter. It's at Yankee

Stadium and its scheduled for 15 rounds unless a knockout ends it sooner.

Months in the making—on, then off—the bout matches a puncher who weaves in the reckless, exciting fashion of a Jack Dempsey, against a poised, polished left-jabbing disciple of Gene Tunney's school of fighting. Call Marciano the Dempsey of today and give Matthews title to Tunney's magnificent boxing equipment, and you have a legend recreated.

Radio and TV rights are reported to have brought \$500,000 to the promoters, the International Boxing Club. The IBC has already announced that its advance sale, with a \$50 top, has passed \$350,000. Harry Markson, IBC managing director, predicts a crowd of 35,000 and a gate totalling \$525,000.

Along Broadway last night the betting odds fluctuated sharply. "It's those squares from the far west betting Matthews and the factory hands from New England dishing it back for Marciano," said one bookie. He reported Marciano as a 7 to 5 choice after Matthews, momentarily, had been 6 to 5. It had opened with Rocky 2 to 1.

At the weigh-in this afternoon, Marciano weighed 186, Matthews 181, approximately what had been expected of the two.

Well-mannered with clean reputations, both fighters are highly esteemed throughout the country. Both served overseas in World War II, both are unbeaten in long stretches of time. Marciano has never lost a fight in four years as a pro. Matthews has been undefeated for eight years, with only a few losses in previous campaigning stretching back to 1937. Only five of Marciano's opponents have gone the distance with him in 40 fights. Matthews had 12 straight kayos last year and 45 out of 70 in his long winning streak. Marciano will be 28 in September; Matthews is 30.

Fistic authorities weren't backing away from their choices, even at this late hour.

"I'd like Marciano if (→ TO PAGE 66)

Matthews (left) reached a turning point in his career with an impressive victory over highly-regarded Irish Bob Murphy.

Wide World



Marciano's stunning knockout of Joe Louis left little doubt that he was the chief contender for the heavyweight title.

International



My Dream Match— Matthews vs. Marciano

(Continued from page 26)

if Matthews had stayed favorite," insisted Jack Kearns, one-time manager of Jack Dempsey and current mastermind for Joey Maxim.

"Brains with a punch will always beat muscle. I can't see Matthews missing," maintained Abe Attell, feather-weight champion of years ago and one of the game's keenest observers.

Among the so-called lesser fry, the unglamorized but generally well-informed seconds and managers, the argument raged back and forth. Several brought up the fact that Marciano had met better names, that he had finished Joe Louis' career with an eighth-round knockout at Madison Square Garden, that he had shaded Roland LaStarza and followed up with a knockout of Rex Layne when Layne was being boomed as the "new Dempsey."

However, most handlers stressed one point—Matthews' manager, Jack Hurley.

Hurley, skinny, bespectacled and sharp-tongued, was the maverick whose revolt, after Matthews had beaten Irish Bob Murphy at Madison Square Garden, sent a boxing dispute into Congress. "Look," said one manager, "Hurley could keep his guy on the Coast forever, drawing money shadow-boxing. He came here because he thinks he's going to take it all. And that's enough for me."

TWO days earlier, at Matthews' final workout at Long Pond Inn, Greenwood Lake, New York, Hurley told why he had reversed his stand, ending his feud with the IBC. "I got my terms—equal percentage of the gate and TV and I didn't sign any exclusive. Matthews is in a tough fight but he'll win."

Hurley, who is well remembered for his handling of Billy Petrolle, the Fargo Express, stated bluntly his admiration for Marciano's strength. "Built like a truck," he said. "But," he added quickly, "Marciano is going to be in with a fighter who will out-think him. Matthews has two ways of winning—by knockout or decision. He'll stab him silly and cut him up and if a spot shows he'll knock him out with his combinations. If not, he still can go along and outbox him."

Yesterday at Marciano's camp in Summit, New Jersey, the writers paid Rocky a final pre-fight visit. Marty Weill, who is listed in the books as Marciano's manager, was at camp but he let Charley Goldman, Rocky's trainer, do the talking. It is common knowledge that Al Weill, Marty's father, still directs Marciano, although he "publicly" relinquished his contract to his stepson when he became a promoter for the IBC.

"Matthews is an old cutie," Goldman said, "and any old fighter can't stand up under the pressure Rocky puts on an opponent. Matthews stands up straight and tries to pull away from punches. Rocky will double up when he does that and nail him with the second punch. Rocky won't let him have the room he wants. He'll back him into corners and punish him 'til his legs give out. It's got to be a knockout."

Manhattan hotels are jammed with visitors pouring in by special trains, planes and cars. Not since the advent of television has a fight caught on with such old-fashioned vigor as has this

one. You can spot the fans' point of origin without trouble. From New England come the Marciano rooters, the New Englanders with their Yankee accents and cocky looks. Matthews' supporters are more distinctive with their light-toned western hats and their unabashed, drawing tones of the great open spaces. This group has its own signs and buttons and, if lacking the numbers of the Marciano camp, more than makes up for it in exuberance.

Marciano was the first to arrive at the weighing-in ceremony this morning. He was hatless and his hair was tousled. He had on a leather jacket and an open shirt. He looked preoccupied but not grim.

"How do you feel?" a writer asked. Rocky grinned and said: "If I wasn't right now, it would be a bad time, wouldn't it?"

Marciano settled down in a corner and waited for Matthews to arrive. He came in 15 minutes later, trailing Hurley. Each time the manager was accosted and stopped, Matthews would also stop, remaining on the spot, quiet and patient. He wore a gray business suit with a necktie, and he had a hat on. He looked ready for a day at a desk in Wall Street.

A columnist, alien to the fact that Hurley prefers to do all of Matthews' talking, inquired of the fighter: "Do you intend to box for the first few rounds?"

Harry looked over at the stranger, friendly but uncommunicative. "He's going to do what the situation calls for him to do," Hurley responded.

When they squared off for the benefit of photographers, they were a striking contrast—Marciano darker-skinned, especially on his arms from the elbows down, Matthews, clear-toned; Marciano with bulging biceps; Matthews with silkier muscles. They looked very fit.

The fighters both disappeared into the medical room where Dr. Marvin (Mal) Stevens, chairman of New York's Medical Advisory Board, supervised a stringent check that included all types of tests. Reporters, cooling their heels, fretted. One said: "Oh for the good old days. If the doc couldn't see through you, you passed."

After the examination, the center of attention shifted back uptown to the offices of the IBC, where out-of-town newspapermen were badgering Murray Goodman, IBC publicist, with questions. "A fellow from Boise says Matthews is 39. What do you know about it?" . . . "Is it true Marciano got knocked down four days ago in a workout?" . . . "The report is all over Chicago that Marciano fractured his right thumb hitting the big bag. What do you say?"

Goodman, with mock chagrin, said: "Gentlemen, I'm sorry, so sorry. All I know about this fight is what I read in the papers."

At Toots Shor's, where early diners were beating the rush, the proprietor was giving his views. "Matthews, he's got class. That's what he licked Bob Murphy on, but he's in with a rough cookie and 15 rounds is a long haul. I'd love to see Hurley's boy take it but this is the wrong match for him."

Joe Benjamin, one-time boxing stand-out, a laughing boy among Shor's habitués, laughed in Toots' face. "This proves you ought to go back to Walters'

in Philadelphia and wait on tables. Hurley has studied this thing out. He has Matthews schooled to make a bum out of Marciano, which he is, anyway. You got to throw out the Louis fight. You know what Joe told his corner at the end of the fifth round: 'This guy is nothing but my legs are gone.' If he didn't collapse, he wins sure. And there's nothing wrong with Matthews' legs."

At dusk, Yankee Stadium's bleachers were fairly well filled, although it would be an hour and a half before the first of the prelims. In the dressing rooms under the stands, some officials and the fighters on the supporting card were already on hand.

Then, at 8 p.m. as required, the main eventers walked in. In fact they almost walked into each other, Marciano going through the gate muffled in a topcoat, as Matthews, also wearing a coat, followed Hurley out of a cab.

The usual late-arriving ringside crowd was treated to the sight of rabid rooting delegations noisily ringing bells as the semi-final began.

A knockout in the fifth round gave announcer Johnny Addie, neat as a pin in his tuxedo, 12 minutes for his introductions before the scheduled TV starting signal. The officials were switched, as is the custom, and Ruby Goldstein came into the ring to referee.

As Addie presented a young welterweight to the crowd, the mild applause gave way to a thunderous roar. It was Marciano coming down the aisle from the third-base side. He had a towel around his neck, partially covering his head. The welcome surged even more loudly as Rocky climbed onto the apron and crawled between the ropes into the ring. He waved in response to the greeting.

The cheers subsided as Addie made another introduction. Then a new tumult shook the park. Matthews was on his way to the ring, Hurley leading the way as usual, from the third-base side, protective as a mother hen, commanding as a Svengali. Matthews was hooded and robed. He followed the manager up the steps but here Hurley deferred, parting the strands for his fighter while the cheers sounded like one huge voice.

As the gloves were being put on in the corners, there was an interruption while the Star Spangled Banner was played.

WHEN the lacing was finished, Goldstein called the fighters and handlers to the center of the ring for final instructions. "No hitting while holding, no rabbit-punching, when a man is knocked down, the other man goes to a neutral corner; you know there is an automatic eight-count . . . no low punches—"

His voice was trailing off, as far as his listeners were concerned. And that included the fighters, the brow-furrowed Marciano, the half-smiling Matthews, both thinking ahead to the job at hand.

Goldstein finished and they returned to their corners. Little Charley Goldman was now standing on the apron, talking to Marciano. Across the way Jack Hurley was giving his last bit of advice to Matthews.

In a matter of seconds, the dream match was to become a reality. All questions were to be answered in the crucible of competition. The fighters were ready. All hearts beat faster waiting for the bell.

Marciano Knocks Out Matthews in Second to Earn Chance at Title

TWO SOLID LEFTS END STADIUM BOUT

Marciano Stays Undefeated
by Knocking Out Matthews
in 2:04 of the Second

OUTFOUGHT UNTIL FINISH

Flails Away Until He Finds
Mark and Gains September
Chance at Walcott

By JAMES P. DAWSON

Unbeaten Rocky Marciano, the ring's block-buster from Brockton, Mass., is the man who will battle Jersey Joe Walcott for the world heavyweight title in September.

The sturdy little gladiator with the primitive fighting style earned this privilege last night in Yankee Stadium, where he knocked out Harry (Kid) Matthews of Seattle in the second round of what was to have been a ten-round struggle.

Under the savage, paralyzing impact of Marciano's wicked left hook to the jaw—two of them, in fact—Matthews sank unconscious in his corner to be counted out in 2 minutes 4 seconds of the second round by Referee Ray Miller. Marciano thus attained his forty-second ring triumph and his thirty-seventh by a knockout.

The finish came with dramatic suddenness. Matthews, the more clever boxer, had outfought Marciano in the first round and was doing well through the second, as far as it went. Then Marciano's left hook began its journey of destruction.

Against a straight left to the face, Marciano whipped that first left hook home, a glancing blow on the chin, that made Matthews' knees buckle and sent him backward near his corner.

The second left hook, a more devastating one, landed flush on the jaw. Matthews went down, his head striking the lower ring rope in his corner before he slid into a reclining position.

Through some confusion, the knockdown timekeeper, Harry Kessler, delayed starting a count over Matthews. But Referee Miller, a pretty good left-hook artist in his fighting days as a lightweight, began counting as soon as Matthews went down.

For a few seconds Matthews stretched out under the count. Then, as the count reached "five," Matthews tried gamely to pull himself together. Grimly he tried to regain his feet and fight back, but Matthews didn't know what he was doing. His impulses were in the true tradition of the ring but his muscles were powerless to respond.

Arises to Half-Crouch

At the count of "eight" Matthews arose to a half-crouching position, as if to stand erect before the ten-second count was completed. Instead, he listed inertly to port, draped himself over the lower ring rope and in that position was counted out.

Manager Jack Hurley and Referee Miller lifted Matthews to his feet and guided him to his chair. After a few minutes' ministrations Matthews appeared to be himself again and was able to smile an acknowledgment of Marciano's traditional handshake.

Following the eight-round knockout with which he ended the ring career of Joe Louis last October, this latest achievement stamps Marciano as the man to fight the aging Walcott for the title. And from his performance in these two significant matches, many in the crowd last night envisioned a new champion.

Walcott was among those who saw this abbreviated, though spectacular, battle. So were Mayor Impellitteri and General Douglas MacArthur, along with many other figures prominent in business and politics. Their emotions can best be left to the imagination at the spectacle of Marciano, fighting as did Jack Dempsey when he was a young, brash ringman with the lust for the kill, polishing off Matthews just as Dempsey might have—with a left hook to the jaw delivered out of a crouch.

Loser Sharp in First

Matthews gave every indication in the first of jabbing his foe through several rounds at least in a delaying action to forestall the time when one of Marciano's left hooks or destructive rights swung from the hip would reach his chin.

The fighter from the Northwest was something of an unknown quantity here, remembered principally for a drubbing he gave Bob Murphy in his only previous local bout. His ring career extends over fourteen years and encompassed 105 fights of which Matthews won seventy against mediocre rivals.

But the manner in which Marciano scored his triumph carried conviction. For no fighter ever had been more thoroughly knocked out than was Matthews. And he was so quickly disposed of because he fought the kind of battle calculated to show Marciano at his fighting best.

Matthews fought to Marciano's style either because he had to or out of an exaggerated idea of his own fistic strength. He figured to follow a strategy of counter-fighting in this struggle, which was rushed into action without the traditional delay when raindrops threatened a thunder shower. Instead, Matthews combined boxing and slugging, just what Marciano wanted.

Marciano has little or no defense. His style invites punches, because he is a wide-open target, confident that the one solid blow he might land will outweigh in effect a half a dozen of his rival's punches.

In the first round Marciano was just a wild-swinging fighting machine, trying to end the battle with a punch or two. Matthews met his rival's charges with solid left jabs flush on the face. They started a red coloring about Marciano's left eye that would have blossomed into a "mouse" had the attack continued for any length of time.

Under instructions from his corner, Matthews started to bang away with his right hand for the jaw whenever the opportunity occurred. The target being wide open, the opportunity presented itself perhaps more than Matthews had anticipated. He found Marciano's jaw easy to reach with his right-hand drives and left hooks, and acted accordingly.

Marciano fought back with savage fury, throwing rights and lefts, often at long range, but missing most of them. At close range, Marciano battered home solid short-arm lefts and rights that must have hurt.

Marciano was even more awkward in the second round. He floundered as he missed with the sweeping right that he threw tirelessly. He was pulled off balance by the momentum as he missed hard left hooks to the jaw.

Infrequently he would land to the head in grazing fashion. But Matthews kept his left jab in his foe's face and cut loose with solid left hooks and occasional right crosses to the jaw or head. Matthews "rode" with some of his foe's leads. He nimbly sidestepped others. He was backtracking from a furious Marciano surge when the Brockton Blazer let fly with the first left hook that found its mark.

Favorite at 11 to 5

Marciano entered the ring the favorite at odds of 11 to 5. He won as he had been expected, although quicker than most of the crowd of 31,188 foresaw, because the advance consensus was he would knock out Matthews the first time he hit him solidly.

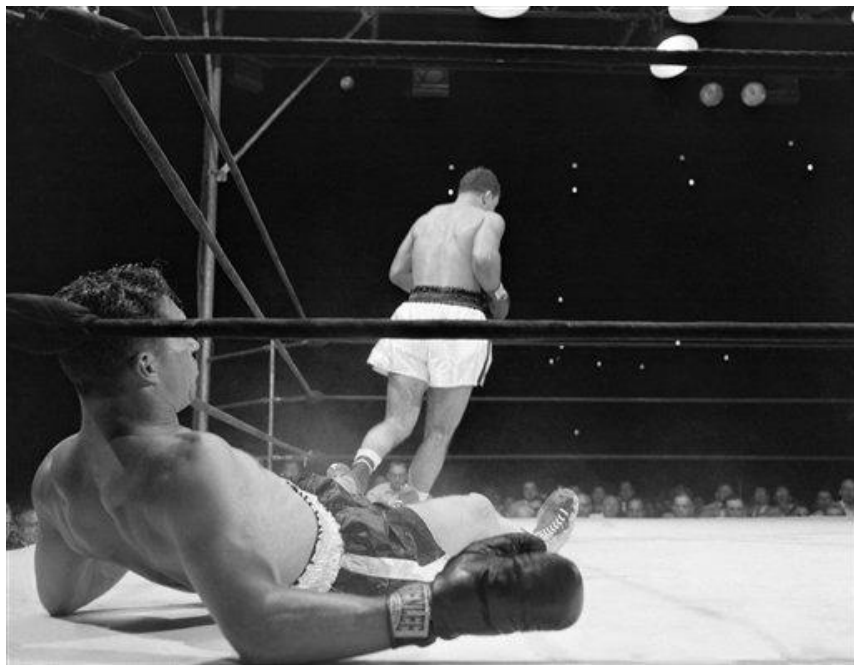
Marciano took a worse beating leaving the ring than anything he absorbed in the abbreviated encounter. His police escort lost him on the journey to the dressing room. As a consequence, Marciano was led on a circuitous trip, partly through the lower stand, and all the way he had to cover and dodge and throw up his arms to guard against the demonstrative well-wishers.

Marciano weighed 187½ pounds and Matthews 179.

The gross receipts were about \$220,000.

The scheduled six-round semi-final was cut to five rounds when rain threatened. In this Dave Davey, 204, Cliffside Park, N. J., defeated Charley Norkus, 195, Bayonne, N. J. Embrell Davidson, 206, Detroit, was credited with a two-round knockout over Charley Riggs, 187½, Philadelphia, in their six-round bout, when an injured rib led Dr. Alexander I. Schiff of the State Athletic Commission staff to order the bout halted at the end of the second round.

Tommy Harrison, 170, Los Angeles, won a six-round decision over Paul Andrews, 170, Corona, Queens. Herbie Hayes, 165½, East Side, won a six-round decision over Al Winn, 166, Bronx. Randy Sandy, 152, Brooklyn, received the decision in six rounds over Calvin Davis, 146½, Philadelphia. Ricardo King, 154¼, Pittsburgh, won a four-round decision over Lee McLaughlin, 155½, West Side.



New York Times, July 29, 1952