

# Henry Winchman Passed Away on May 22, 2021 at the Age of 91

By Mike Silver

Henry Winchman, a New York club fighter who was active from 1951 to 1957 passed away on May 22, 2021 at the age of 91.

In the 1950s (and the three decades that preceded it) boxing had an established hierarchal structure that was easy to follow. At the top of the ladder were the 8 world champions. Just below them were the top ten title contenders for each weight division, followed by scores of fringe contenders who were trying to break into the “top ten”. Last, but certainly not least, were talented 6 and 8 round preliminary boxers (club fighters) who, on the cusp of main

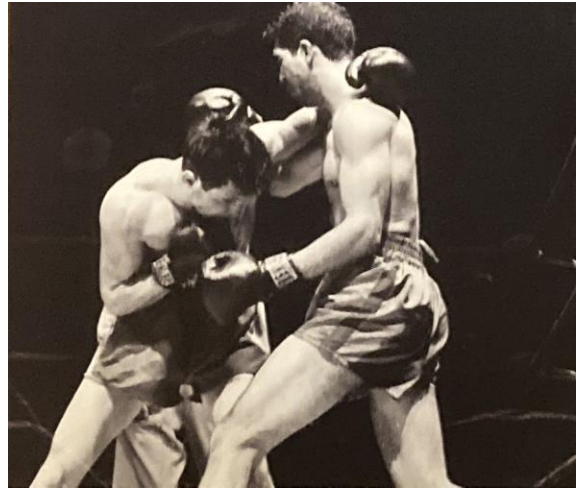


event status, filled undercards in support of the featured bout. In those days good undercard fighters were not only important to the education and experience of every future champion and contender, they were a necessary component of every fight show. Without these fighters the show could not go on. The best of these prelim boxers were rarely stopped and, win or lose, could always be counted on to give a competitive performance and go the distance. They were always in demand and were the stepping stones that an up and coming fighter had to get by if he wanted to move onto the next level. Henry Winchman was one of those fighters.

Although they rarely attained main bout status these fighters are not to be confused with what are derisively termed “tomato cans” in the boxing vernacular. “Tomato cans” are boxers of limited talent and desire who understand they are just going to be used as cannon fodder to build up the record of a promising prospect. This type of boxer is ubiquitous today. They account for the ridiculously high KO percentages of every undefeated prospect lucky enough to have a major promotional corporation backing him.

In his first year as a pro Henry, a light welterweight, compiled a 12-4 record (In those days fighting once a month was not uncommon, especially in the early

learning stages). In his second year, he was promoted to 6 and 8 round undercard bouts against tougher competition and won 6 of 12. Henry was a well-schooled boxer who was rarely hit solidly. Over the next four years he lost as many fights as he won. His final fight, in 1957, was a 5<sup>th</sup> round TKO loss to Tony DeCola in Madison Square Garden. It was only the third time in 47 fights that he failed to go the distance. He finished with a 21-22-4 (KO 4/KO by 3) record.



Winchman vs Danny Jo Perez

Henry fought in all of the New York boxing clubs that were still in existence in the early 1950s but have long since disappeared: The St. Nick's Arena, Ridgewood Grove, Broadway Arena, Eastern Parkway Arena, Sunnyside Gardens, Fort Hamilton and the Long Beach Arena. He appeared in the Madison Square Garden Ring 13 times. There were few soft touches on his record. Among his opponents were Danny Giovanelli, Tony DeCola, Johnny Gorman, Jose Morell, Rocky Sullivan, Emerson Butcher, Danny Jo Perez, Bobby Powlowitz and Jerry Drouin—all tough, talented club fighters.

Henry was one of the last Jewish boxers to come out of the lower east side of Manhattan. (From the early 1900s to the late 1930s New York's lower east side neighborhood produced hundreds of Jewish boxing stars including over a dozen world champions).

In 1957, after hanging up his gloves, Henry went to work for Western Union, eventually rising to supervisor. He retired after 30 years' service.