

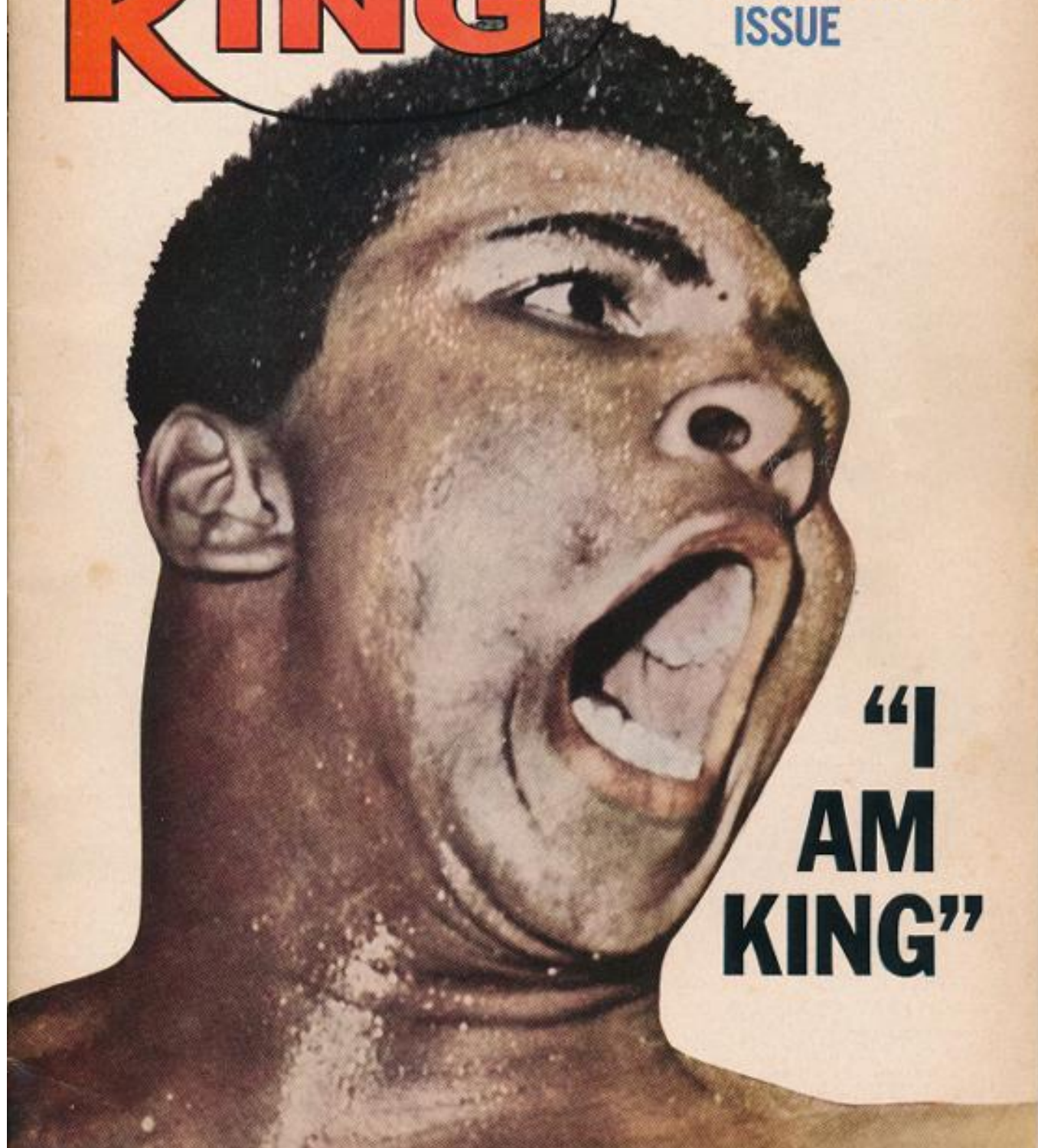
CLAY FEEDS PREDICTIONS TO EXPERTS

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The RING

**BIG
CHAMPIONSHIP
ISSUE**



**“I
AM
KING”**

"I AM THE GREATEST!" BOXING WORLD STUNNED

Clay's Victory
Greatest upset
Seen Yet In
Heavy division

By NAT LOUBET

M IAMI BEACH, FLA. (By Telegraph to The Ring)—
What, when, how and why is a boxing expert? The
answer comes in Spanish—Quien Sabe? Translated—
Who Knows?

On the night of February 25, in the Miami Beach arena,
before a disappointing turnout of 8,297, Cassius Clay, former
Olympic champion, forced Sonny Liston to give up in seven
rounds, and made himself the heavyweight king of the world.

As the seventh was about to get under way the referee,
Barney Felix, announced that Liston was out of action with
an injury to the left shoulder, plus cut eyes.

Eventually a big squad of doctors examined Liston and an-
nounced that they were sure he was not able to defend him-
self when he moved out of the picture.

They called his injury bona fide and the Miami Beach Com-
mission followed with an announcement that Sonny's dough
had been released.

Thus the title passed with the defending champion sitting in
his corner. It was somewhat reminiscent of the July 1919 fight
at Toledo, in which Jess Willard threw in a towel and Jack
Dempsey became the champion in the third round.

Neither Liston nor Clay had been floored. That third or
fourth round knockout defeat of The Lip, predicted by 44 of
the 47 experts covering the fight, had failed to materialize.

The end came so suddenly. Without warning, Clay went wild,
his handlers went crazy with him, and the Liston entourage
was huddled in a scene of defeat and desperation.

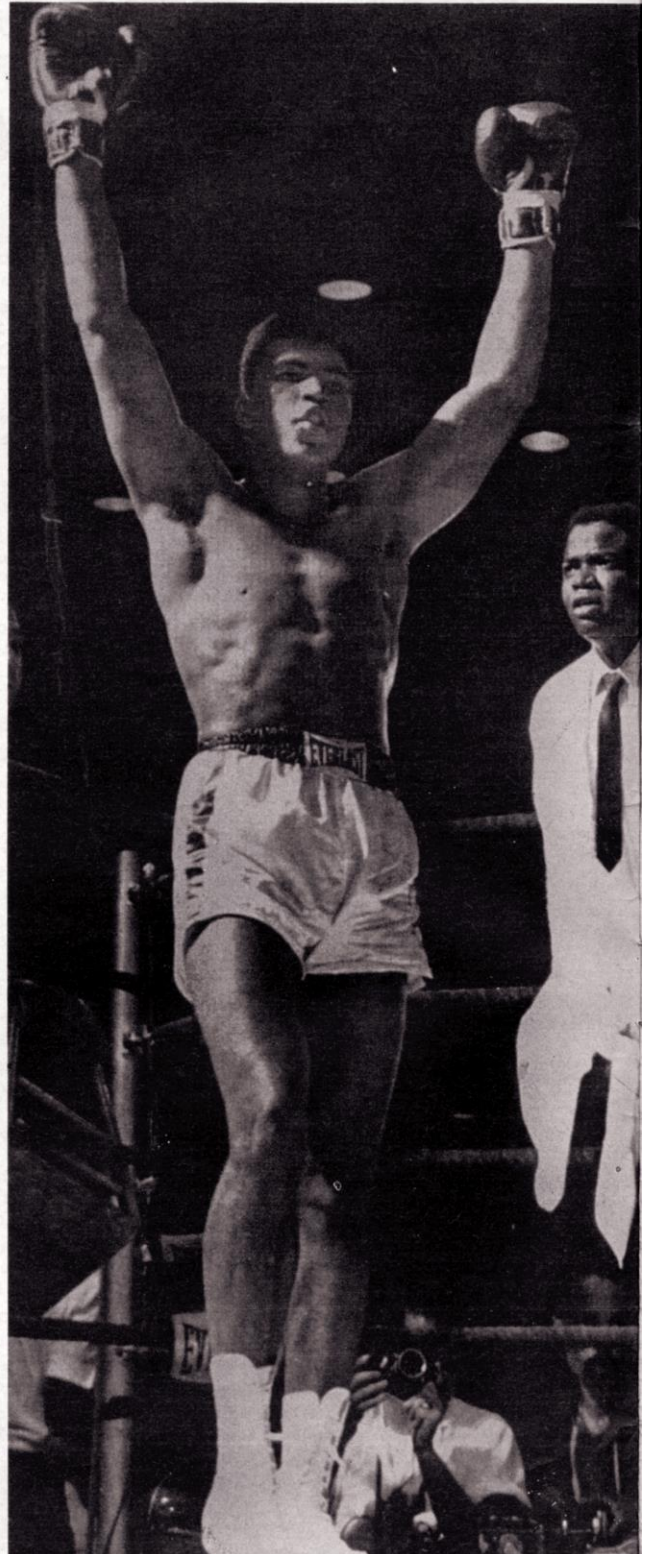
"I am the greatest!" shouted Clay. "At the age of 22, I am
the king." And so on, and so on, ad lib and ad infinitum.
Cassius was beside himself with joy.

Later Clay shouted to the reporters, "None of you hypocrites
can call it a fix."

It was the greatest surprise ending in the history of the
heavyweight division.

Clay had gone into the ring a 7 to 1 underdog. It might have
been 50 to 1 in so far as the effect on the betting market was
concerned. There was no popular or expert confidence in Clay.

Here is Cassius Clay, new heavyweight champion of the
world, in first moments of triumph.



An easy target for Liston, he had been called. A fighter with a style unorthodox who would be punched full of holes, the dopesters had insisted.

"Clay is scared to death," one of the Miami Beach Commission doctors said when he found Cassius with a high pulse.

"I might hurt that boy bad," Liston had announced, with seeming misgivings as to The Lip's ability to last three rounds and still be in possession of life and limb.

Nobody could remember when so tremendous an upset had taken place in a heavyweight championship contest.

The fight ended with a culprit who was left with a lot of explaining to do.

In St. Francis Hospital after the fight, Jack Nilon, Liston's manager, said that Sonny had suffered a shoulder injury during training.

Because of the injury, Liston had done no sparring on February 3, 4, 5 and 14, Nilon revealed.

When Nilon was asked why he had not demanded a postponement until he could produce a fit, thoroughly able champion in the ring, Jack indicated that Sonny figured to win, anyway.

The Miami Beach Commission did not like the result and proceeded to hold an investigation.

Dr. Alexander Robbins, chief physician for the local Commission, announced that Liston had strained his left shoulder, and could not raise his arm.

The day after the fight Liston was examined by two outstanding local specialists, Dr. Lester Russell and Dr. Stanley Winslow.

When Liston was examined at St. Francis Hospital right after the sorry climax, Dr. Octavio Suarez, who conducted x-ray examinations, said that Sonny had no sense of feeling from the left side of the neck down to his elbow.

Liston charged that his shoulder had been injured by a punch "after the bell had ended the first round, and Clay kept punching at me."

Note, please, that Liston threw the onus on Clay, and said nothing about that injury in training revealed by Jack Nilon.

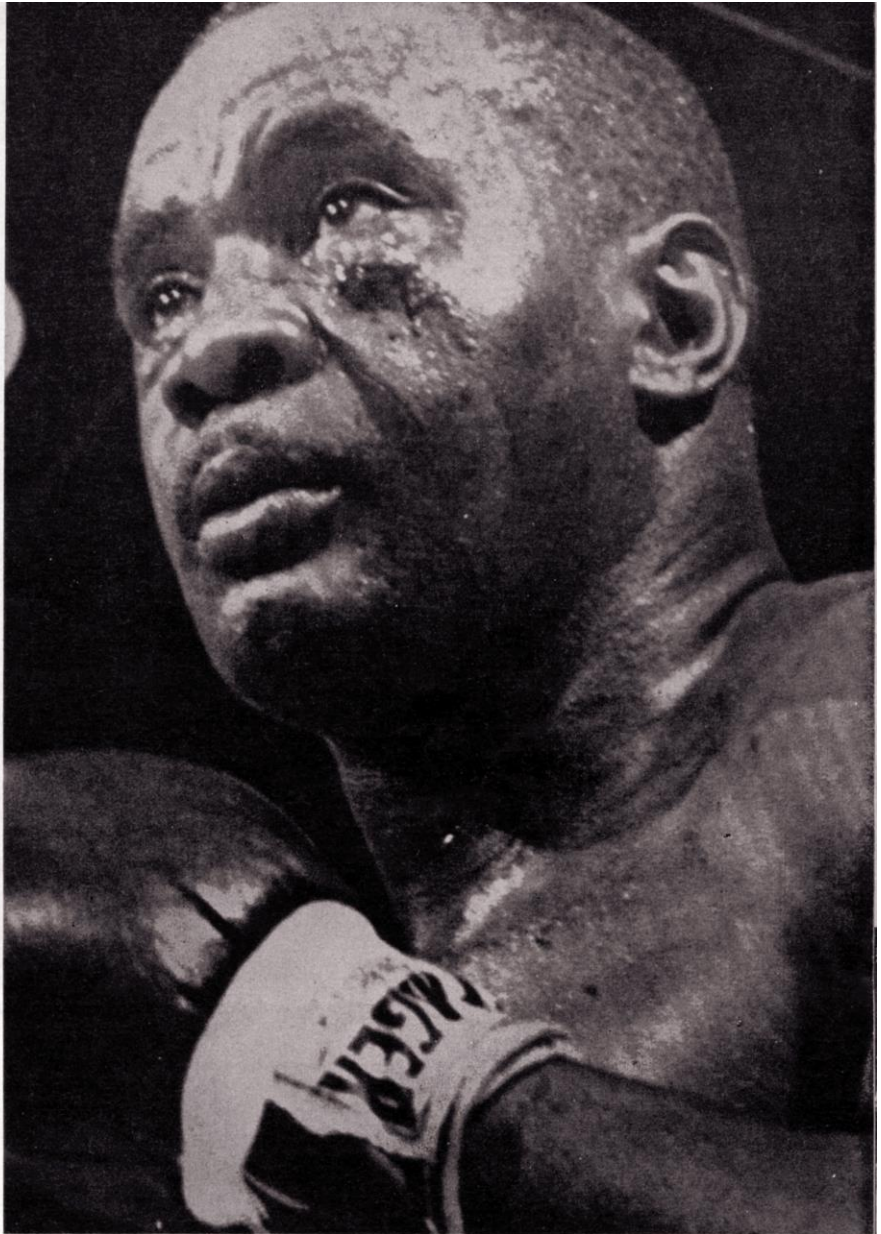
The effect of the Liston defeat was rather complicated. The general result was not good for boxing because it left an opening for so many fans to holler that Liston had quit.

On the other hand, there was the elimination of Liston as the champion in his second defense of the title.

The Ring Magazine accepts Jack Nilon's explanation that Liston was hurt in training.

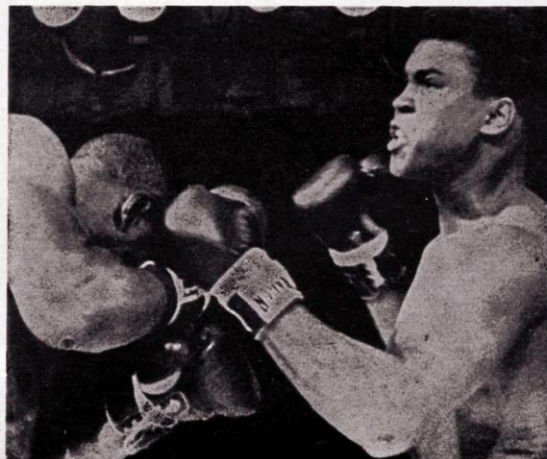
There are willing, able, young, eager heavyweights who stand in line ahead of Liston, and deserve consideration now.

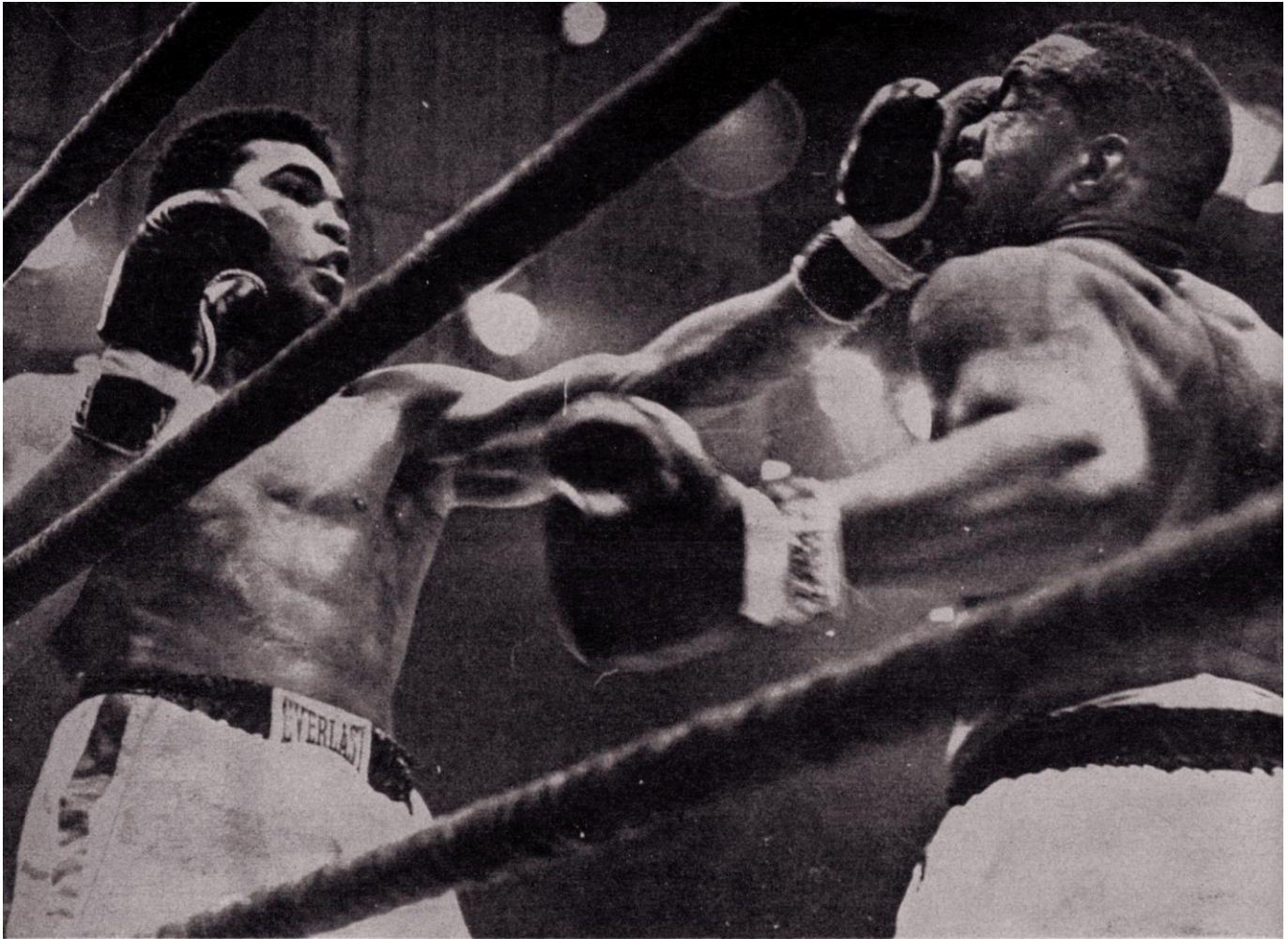
The fight destroyed the image of Liston invincibility. The clay feet were exposed as belonging not to Cassius but to the slow,



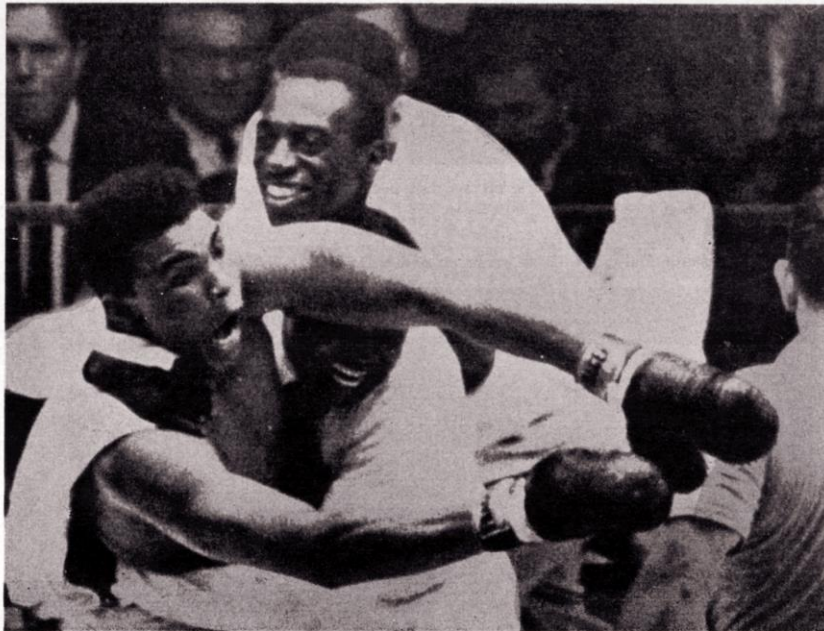
No picture of a champion, this. Liston's left eye has been peppered raw and he is on way out.

A shot in first round. Liston covers up as Cassius lands a left to the head.





Above, Clay lands a stiff left to Liston's right eye in the sixth round, and Sonnyboy ain't so sunny. Below, Bedlam in Clay's corner. Referee Felix just has announced that The Lip is the new champion and Cassius and handlers go nuts.



lumbering, 218 pound fighter who twice had stopped Floyd Patterson in the first round.

What did the fight prove?

To begin with, it showed Liston to be greatly overrated. He was slow and lumbering. He failed utterly to solve the step around and move out style of the winning contender.

Liston did not have the physical condition with which he stopped Patterson and later duplicated that result. At 218 pounds Sonny was too heavy.

That easy life of his, that European tour in which he went around kissing and otherwise making a spectacle of himself, showed up in the ring against Clay.

The Ring staff was surprised at the score cards for the six rounds, which follow:—

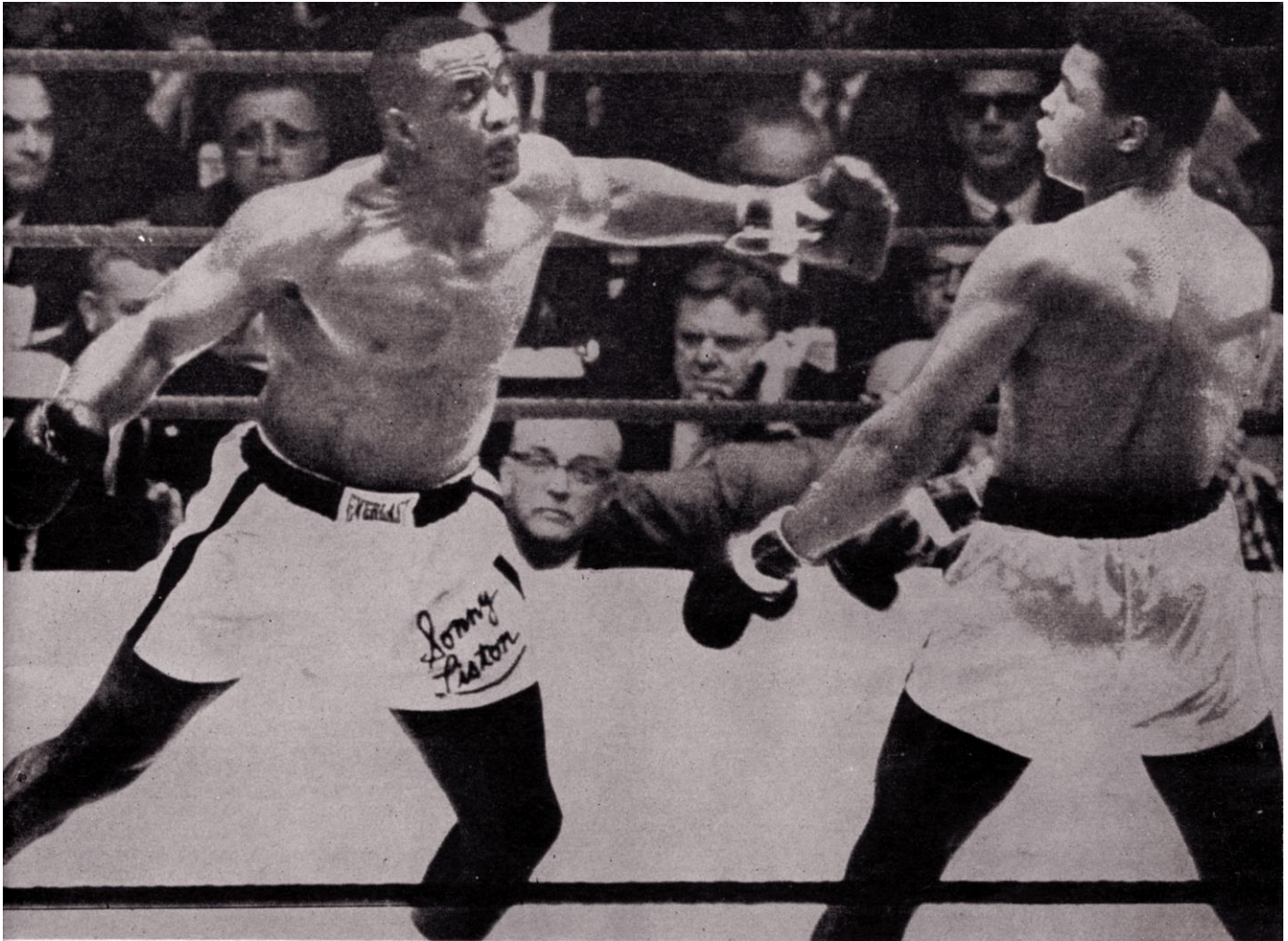
REFEREE BARNEY FELIX

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Pts.
Liston	9	10	9	10	10	9	9—57
Clay	10	9	10	9	9	10	10—57

JUDGE BILLY LOVITT

Liston	9	10	10	10	10	9	9—58
Clay	10	9	10	9	8	10	10—56

THE RING



A shot in the second round. Liston is shown doing what he did so often—missing a left hander. This was not according to schedule, and Sonny is puzzled.

JUDGE GUS JACOBSEN

Liston	9	10	9	9	10	9—56
Clay	10	10	10	10	9	10—59

To be sure, Clay never had Liston in danger of a knockout. To be just as sure, Clay took some pretty stout wallops, especially in the fifth round.

But we must not lose sight of the fact that it was a boxing match, and that Clay kept pushing that left into Liston's "mush" and cut the loser's eyes pretty badly.

Clay made a fine recovery in the sixth from the eye trouble he had suffered in the fifth, when he charged that Sonny had rubbed liniment on his gloves. This was discounted.

Take it from any angle, it was a Clay triumph. He wasn't stopped in three or four. He wasn't knocked out in six and he did not have to make good on his prediction that he would take the title in eight.

The Ring Magazine's surprise choice of Clay as the Fighter of the Year for 1963 may lead to his making it two straight as the standout scrapper, in 1964.



They are taping Liston's left shoulder and the fight is over. There is no joy in Sonny's corner. What became of the Charley who murdered Patterson?

APRIL, 1964