

FORGOTTEN CHAMPIONS

All-time great — only man to
kayo 'Sugar Ray' Robinson...

JOEY MAXIM

During his twenty-five-year fighting career, covering 202 contests, "Sugar Ray" Robinson was knocked out but one time.

Sure, you fans recall the name of the man who accomplished this feat — don't you?

You don't?

Well, it was Giuseppe Berardinelli! He was also the first man to defeat Floyd Patterson. We are sure you now recall him — as Joey Maxim. Yet, he still is a member of the legion of FORGOTTEN CHAMPIONS.

Maxim, who was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on March 28, 1922, was known during his long ring career as a "spoiler": A clever and crafty defensive boxer, he used his skills not so much as an offensive weapon as he did defensi-

by Lew Eskin

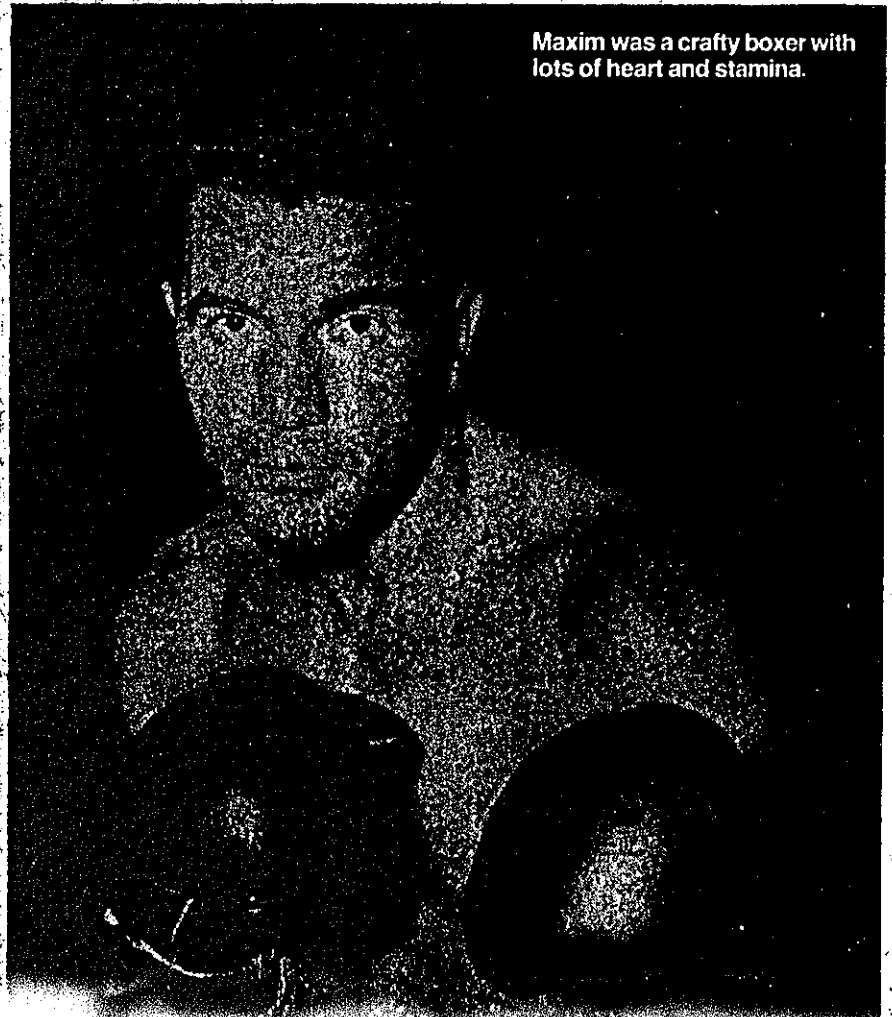
vely. Managed during most of his career by the cunning "Doc" Kearns, he made a career out of fighting the Negro boxers that other Negroes wouldn't fight.

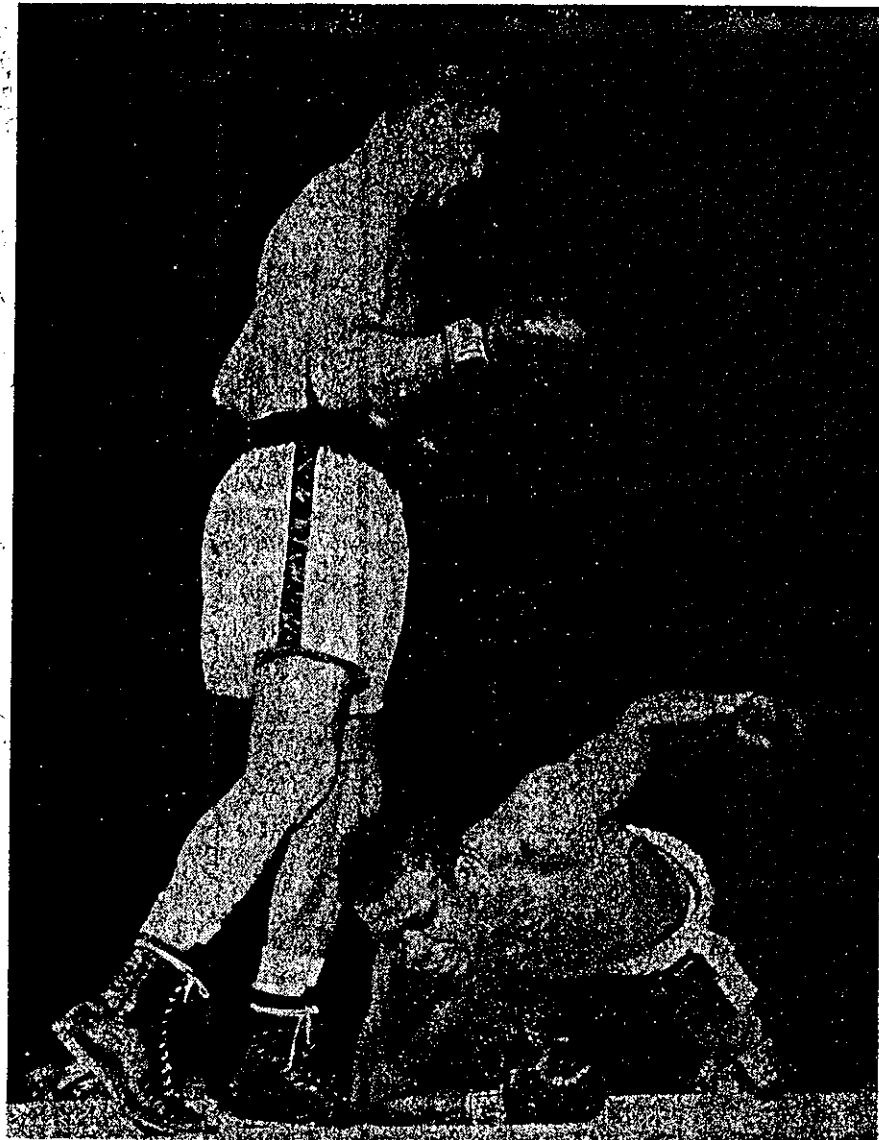
His pro debut came in his home town on January 13, 1941, winning a four-round decision over Bob Perry. Never one to waste time, his next bout — two weeks later — was an eight-rounder which he won by beating Frank McBride.

Before the year was over, he had fought nine more times, winning eight and scoring victories over such veteran heavyweights as Lee Oma, Clarence "Red" Burman, Bill Peterson, and Nate Bolden. Not bad for one not yet twenty years old.

The following year he had 16 fights, beating Curtis Sheppard and Lou Brooks among others, and had his first two encounters with his downstate rival

Maxim was a crafty boxer with lots of heart and stamina.





'Sugar Ray' Robinson sprawls at Maxim's feet in the 13th round. He got up but couldn't answer the bell for the 14th.

from Cincinnati, Ezzard Charles, losing two close decisions.

In 1943 he whipped Clarence Brown twice and then, on March 10, was kayoed in the first round by Sheppard "The Hatchman" was one of the most feared punchers of his era. Three weeks later Maxim outpointed Sheppard, but that kayo was the first and only time in 115 fights that Joey failed to last the limit with an opponent.

Maxim added four more victories that year — over Al Jordan, Nate Bolden, Buddy Scott and Claudio Villar — then joined the army, serving as a physical instructor in the Army Air Force.

He managed to continue his career while in service, winning seven of nine bouts. Returning to full-time action in 1946, he won twelve, lost two and went to two draws, beating Jersey Joe Wal-

cott along the way.

Maxim was fighting mostly against heavyweights, spotting twenty-five pounds or more as he usually scaled around one hundred and eighty. During 1947 and 1948 he lost but three of twenty-two contests, two of these to Walcott.

He dropped down to the light-heavyweight limit late in 1948 to defeat Bob Satterfield and Jimmy Bivins, and then, after losing another close decision to Ezzard Charles, he outpointed Gus Lesnevich on May 23, 1949, to win the U.S. light-heavyweight title and earn a shot at Freddy Mills and the world championship.

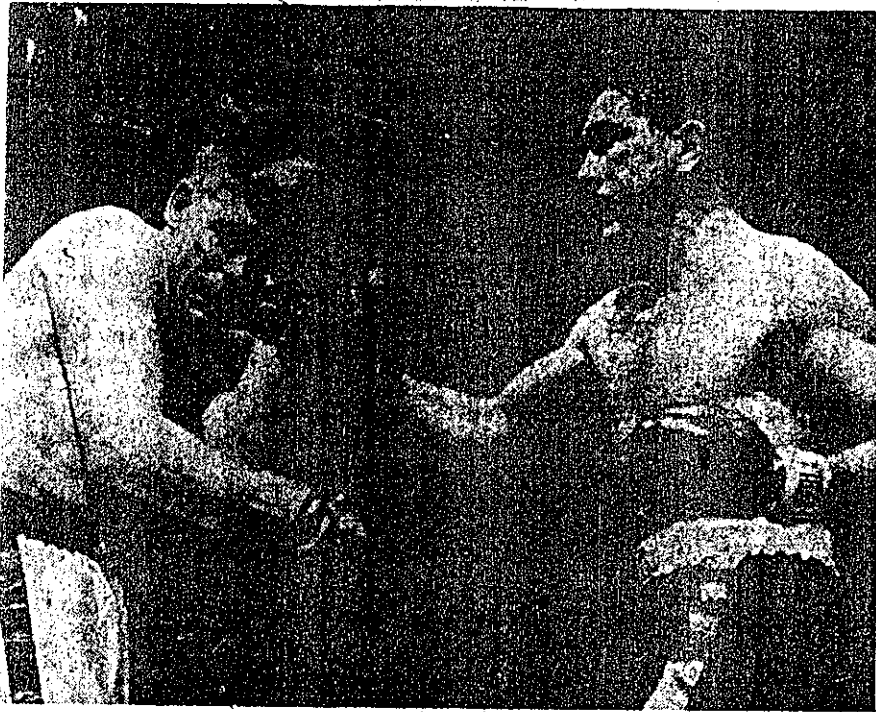
He faced Mills on January 24, 1950, and although it was no real surprise that Maxim won, the fact that he kayoed Mills in the tenth round was a shocker, because Joey was never known for his punching ability.

On May 30, 1951, he challenged Charles in Chicago for the world heavyweight title, and once again was outpointed by Ezzard. On August 22, a decisive underdog, he survived a rough first round to easily outpoint tough southpaw Bob Murphy and retain his light-heavyweight title.

When he met "Sugar Ray" Robinson on June 25, 1952, in New York's Yankee Stadium before 48,000-plus fans he was again a huge underdog. On one of the hottest nights of that year, he outlasted both Robinson and referee



The first loss of Floyd Patterson's career was to Maxim.



One of his finest performances was in whipping tough Bob Murphy.

Ruby Goldstein. Ruby had bowed out after the tenth round to be replaced by Ray Miller, and Robinson, after being floored in the thirteenth, was unable to answer the bell for the fourteenth round.

Much has been written over the years as to how it was the heat, and not Maxim, that did "Sugar Ray" in. I was at ringside and it was hot, but it was just as hot in the ring for Maxim, who had been weakened by weight-making. As for Robinson, at his normal weight, it was the solid body-thumps of Maxim, plus the wise use of his weight and strength to lean on Ray, that brought the "Sugarman" down.

On December 17, Maxim lost his championship as he was outpointed by Archie Moore in St. Louis. An odd note is that after the fight Moore's new manager was "Doc" Kearns.

They met again in Ogden, Utah, on June 24, 1953, with Moore retaining his title on a hairline verdict, most of the ringsiders feeling that Maxim deserved the decision.

A third meeting with the crown on the line was clearly won by Moore, in Miami on January 27, 1954.

Joey's career hit the upswing again in the later part of the year when he outpointed Patterson and Paul Andrews. In the Andrews fight Joey's left eye was completely closed in the first round, yet he came back to win every one of the remaining nine rounds.

That, however, turned out to be his last "hurrah" as, except for a decision win over huge Edgardo Romero in his lone 1956 fight, he lost all of his remaining eight bouts, the last six in a row. Maxim's last ring effort was in Mannheim, Germany, on May 17, 1958, when he dropped the verdict to Ulli

Ritter.

In all he lost twenty-nine times. Aside from the kayo loss to Sheppard, he lost once on a foul to Charley Roth back in 1942, and the rest were decisions. He won eighty-two contests, scoring twenty-one knockouts, and boxed four draws.

He fought nine world champions, and those he faced were the cream of the light-heavyweight and heavyweight classes during the '40s and '50s.

Of his twenty-nine losses, they were to nineteen different men and he beat eight of them in return matches.

Aside from those previously mentioned, he whipped Ted Lowery, "Big Boy" Brown, John Thomas, Bob Foxworth, Buddy Walker, Clarence Jones, Cleo Everett; Larry Lane, Hubert Hood, Sheldon Bell, Bob Garner, Georgie Parks, Danny Nardico, Olle Tandberg, Joe Kahut, Bill Petersen, Al Velez, Phil Muscato, Ralph DeJohn, drew with Jim Ritchie, Pat Valentino, Charley Eagle and faced Carl "Bobo" Olson, Eddie Machen, Willie Pastrano, Booker Beckwith, Lloyd Marshall, Johnny Flynn and Heinz Neuhaus.

Until the tail-end of his career Charles, Bivins Marshall and Moore were the only men his own weight who were able to defeat him — a remarkable record, but one that nevertheless has left him as just another "FORGOTTEN CHAMPION." □



Maxim's career was masterminded by "Doc" Kearns.