

"Sugar Ray Still Sweetest"

THE RING RATES

THE MIDDLEWEIGHT CHAMPIONS

EXCEPT FOR THE HEAVYWEIGHTS, NO WEIGHT CLASS HAS produced as many legends and legendary battles as the middleweights.

In 1945, *The Ring* first began selecting a Fight of the Year. The heavies and middleweights have dominated the award. The two most recent ring battles destined to live forever in boxing lore were middleweight contests, Marvellous Marvin Hagler's spectacular knockout of Thomas Hearns and Sugar Ray Leonard's impossible decision win over Hagler.

In 1928, Gene Tunney was named the first recipient of *The Ring's* Fighter of the Year award. Since, two weight divisions, the heavyweights and the middleweights, have had a virtual lock on that trophy.

Explaining the popularity of warriors weighing between 147 and 160 pounds is simple. The best combine the power of heavyweights with the speed and mobility of the lighter divisions. Also, the common man can easily identify with a middleweight, who is smaller than King Kong, but not

as light as a feather or as tiny as a fly.

Forty-two men have held the world middleweight championship and several others, not included here, have staked claims to the crown. The two most recent world middleweight champions, Hagler and Leonard, also have been omitted from this survey as either, or both, are considered still quite capable of providing a performance that could radically change his place in boxing history.

Putting the remaining 40 in their proper perspective was an extremely difficult task. Each, as a champion, can be considered a great fighter. But, as it did last year with the heavyweights and light heavyweights, *The Ring* has attempted to provide an objective evaluation of the men recognized as world middleweight champions.

Read on for the results.

(Editor's note: All references to Fighter of the Year, Fight of the Year and Hall of Fame refer to selections by *The Ring*.)

RAY ROBINSON



1. RAY ROBINSON (1951, 1951-1952, 1955-1957, 1957, 1958-1960): Born Walker Smith Jr., Sugar Ray Robinson emerges a runaway winner as *The Ring's* all-time middleweight champion. Considered by many the greatest fighter, pound-for-pound, in history, Robinson rates a perfect 10 in eight of the 10 categories considered by *The Ring*.

Robby drew a nine in defense, no-knock considering he was an aggressive gladiator willing to mix at the drop of a glove. His fearlessness led him to suffer cuts on occasion, and in the category of cut resistance, Robinson draws an eight. Otherwise, one has to search long and hard for the slightest flaw in this near-perfect fighting machine. He was lightning quick, moved with grace and punched with terrific power. And his courage and determination could never be questioned. Perhaps the greatest tribute that can be paid Ray Leonard is to say that he lived up to the name Sugar Ray.

Robinson held the middleweight crown an amazing five times. And he did it after establishing himself as one of the greatest, if not the greatest, welterweight champions in history! Only torrid heat prevented him from joining Bob Fitzsimons and Henry Armstrong as boxing's only true triple champions when he collapsed in his corner before the 14th round in his bid to unseat the badly trailing Joey Maxim as light heavyweight kingpin. It was the only time in 202 fights that Robinson was stopped.

Robinson first won the middleweight championship in 1951, stopping Jake LaMotta in the 13th round. He was just short of his 30th birthday. He lost and regained it until 1960, when Paul Pender became the first man to beat him twice, effectively ending his dominance of the division. Still, Robinson remained a factor and a drawing card until announcing his retirement Dec. 10, 1965.

Robinson finished his remarkable career with a record of 175-19-6, with two no-contests and 110 knockouts. His record against other middleweight champions: LaMotta (W10); LaMotta (L10); LaMotta (W10); LaMotta (W10); LaMotta (W12); Olson (KO12); LaMotta (TKO13); Turpin (L15); Turpin (TKO10); Olson (W15); Graziano (KO3); Basilio (L15); Basilio (W15); Pender (L15); Pender (L15); Fullmer (D15); Fullmer (L15); Downes (L10); Giardello (D10). Named *The Ring's* Fighter of the Year in 1942 and 1951. Elected to *The Ring's* Hall of Fame in 1967.

2. CARLOS MONZON (1970-1977): Tragically, recent personal problems have brought the name Carlos Monzon back to the headlines.

But for seven years, this great Argentinian made news with his fists, defending the middleweight championship a division-record 14 times before retiring still champion. Unlike most, Monzon smartly never attempted a comeback, thus preserving his image as the lanky power-puncher who proved virtually indestructible inside the ropes. Though finishing a good five points behind Robinson, Monzon rated a 10 in six categories, drawing his lowest score (seven) in footwork. Monzon won the championship in 1970, knocking out Nino Benvenuti in the fourth round in the contest named *The Ring's* Fight of the Year. He took on all comers and emerged victorious.

When Monzon decided he had had enough, his record stood 89-3-8 with one contest and 61 KOs, all of the losses and draws coming in the early stages of his career. Ironically, he proved unbeatable when he stepped into world-class competition, winning his final 32 fights. He was never stopped. Monzon's record against other middleweight champs: Benvenuti (KO12); Benvenuti (TKO3); Griffith (TKO14); Griffith (W15); Valdez (W15); Valdez (W15). Named Fighter of the Year in 1972 and elected to the Hall of Fame in 1983.

3. STANLEY KETCHEL (1908-1908, 1908-1913): Until Robinson and Monzon came along, "The Michigan Assassin," born Stanislaus Keical, was generally regarded as the ultimate middleweight. Certainly, he would have given Robby, Monzon or any other middleweight a life-and-death battle.

Ketchel rates perfect 10s in five categories and rates less than good in just one, footwork, where he draws an average six. He was durable, colorful and quick on the best. Only Fitzsimmons and Robinson could match his power, which was potent enough to drop Jack Johnson, ranked No. 2 in our heavyweight ratings.

Ketchel won the vacant championship with a 20-round knockout of Jack "Win" Sullivan in 1908, defended it three times, then lost it later that year to Billy Papke, who sucker-punched Ketchel into a fog when the referee instructed the two to touch gloves and come out fighting. Less than three months later, the two met again, with Ketchel destroying Papke in 11 rounds. He defended the crown just once after regaining it, beating Papke by decision before failing the challenge for Johnson's championship. He was shot and killed by Walter Dibley, a jealous farmhand, at the age of 23.

Ketchel's career was interrupted with his record standing 52-4-4 with four no decisions and 49 knockouts. His record against other middleweight champions: Papke (W10); Papke (KOby12); Papke (KO11); Papke (W20); Klaus (ND6). He was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1954.

4. EMILE GRIFFITH (1966-1967, 1967-1968): Like Robinson, Emile Alphonse Griffith, a native of the Virgin Islands, captured the welterweight championship, then went on to a long and illustrious career as a middleweight, winning that world championship twice.

A determined and extremely durable battler, Griffith fought everyone around during his time and rates perfect scores in four categories, including historical impact as he was one of boxing's few true double champs. Griffith falls short of the leaders in punching power as he was never considered a knockout puncher, especially after killing Benny Paret in a welterweight title match.

As welterweight champion, Griffith challenged middleweight kingpin Dick Tiger in 1966, winning the heavier crown by decision. He retained it twice before dropping a 15-round nod to Benvenuti. The rematch saw Griffith regain the title, but their third pairing, in 1968, had Benvenuti win on points. Amazingly, Griffith tried to win the welterweight crown for a fourth time the following year, losing a 15-round decision to Jose Napoles. Undaunted, Griffith continued fighting until 1977, losing twice to Monzon in bids for a third middleweight championship.

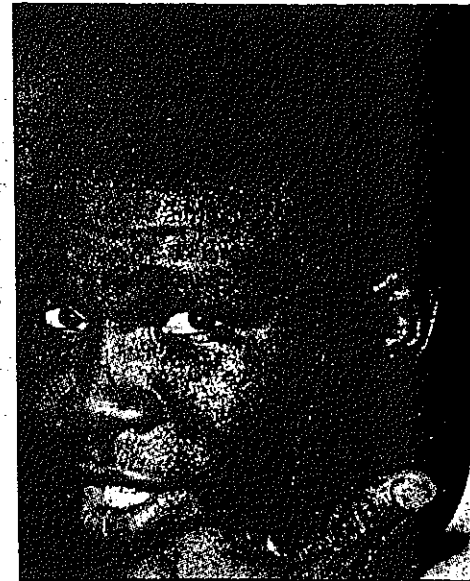
Griffith's career log stands 85-24-2 with one no decision and 23 KOs. His record against other middleweight champions: Tiger (W15); Benvenuti (L15); Benvenuti (W15); Benvenuti (L15); Tiger (W10); Monzon (TKOby14); Monzon (L15); Antuoferno (L10); Minter (L10). Named Fighter of the Year in 1964 and elected to the Hall of Fame in 1981.



CARLOS MONZON



STANLEY KETCHEL



EMILE GRIFFITH

HARRY GREB



5. HARRY GREB (1923-1926): "The Human Windmill." Edward Henry Greb was the stuff fistic legends are made of. He earned his nickname, he didn't just give himself a colorful tag.

A perpetual motion machine, Greb engaged in an incredible 299 bouts against anyone willing to lace 'em up, regardless of weight. He receives four perfect scores, in determination, durability, quality of opposition and historical impact. The lowest scores given Greb were average, sixes in defense, footwork and punching power. Greb could have cared less about the first two and did just fine with a minimum of the third category.

Greb won the championship via a 15-round decision over Johnny Wilson in 1923. He defended it four times before yielding to Tiger Flowers via a 15-round duke in 1926. Greb won two fights, then challenged Flowers, but dropped another verdict. Later it was discovered Greb had fought many of his later battles sightless in one eye. Two months after losing to Flowers for the second time, Greb underwent an eye operation in Atlantic City and died of complications.

Greb's record is 106-8-3 with 182 no decisions and 49 knockouts. His record against other middleweight champions: Chip (ND6); Chip (ND10); Al McCoy (ND10); Chip (ND10); Chip (ND10); O'Dowd (ND10); Al McCoy (ND10); Wilson (W15); Wilson (W15); Flowers (ND10); Wilson (W10); Walker (W15); Flowers (L15). Elected to Hall of Fame in 1955.

MICKEY WALKER



6. MICKEY WALKER (1926-1931): "The Toy Bulldog," born Edward Patrick Walker, finishes in a tie for sixth place with Dick Tiger. In the event of ties, the fighters will be listed in chronological order, thus we'll deal with Walker first.

Walker won the welterweight championship in 1922 and held it until 1926 losing a bid for Greb's middleweight crown along the way. But after losing his welterweight laurels, Walker annexed the middleweight championship by beating Flowers in 1926. A strong puncher with exceptional durability, Walker fought anyone at any weight, even meeting with success against the best heavyweights of his era. He receives three perfect scores, in determination, durability and quality of opposition.

As Walker lived up to his nickname, opponents found it almost impossible to make him take a backward step. He was in your face at all times. After beating Flowers, he defended his crown three times and tried unsuccessfully to unseat light heavyweight champion Tommy Loughran. He gave up his championship in 1931 and tried for the light heavy title again two years later, but lost a points verdict to Maxie Rosenbloom. He died in Freehold, New Jersey, in 1981.

Walker posted a mark of 93-19-4 with 46 no decisions, one no contest and 60 KOs. His record against other middleweight champions: Greb (L15); Flowers (W10). Elected to the Hall of Fame in 1955.

DICK TIGER



6. DICK TIGER (1963, 1965-1966): Born Richard Ihetu, this rugged Nigerian is another who had the ability to become a true multiple world champion, winning the middleweight crown twice before garnering the light heavyweight championship. Makes you wonder why today's fighters waste their time with meaningless junior divisions.

Tiger was a true action fighter, not as relentless as Walker or Greb, but slicker, rating perfect scores in durability and determination in addition to quality of opposition.

Tiger won the WBA middleweight crown from Gene Fullmer in 1962, drew with Fullmer in a rematch, then stopped him in seven rounds to gain recognition as world champion. Tiger lost the crown in his first defense, dropping a decision to Joey Giardello. Two years later he beat Giardello to take back the title, then lost it to Griffith in his first defense. In his very next start, he stripped the light heavy crown from the grasp of Jose Torres.

Tiger announced his retirement in 1971 and died of cancer less than five months later at the age of 41. He won 61 times, losing 17 with three draws. He knocked out 26 opponents. His record against other middleweight champions: Downes (TKO5); Giardello (W10); Giardello (L10); Fullmer (W15); Fullmer (D15); Fullmer (TKO7); Giardello (L15); Giardello (W15); Griffith (L15); Benvenuti (W10); Griffith (L10). He was named Fighter of the Year in 1962 and again in 1965, and his 10-round decision win over Frank DePaula was designated Fight of the Year in 1968. Elected to the Hall of Fame in 1974.

MARCEL CERDAN

1. MARCEL CERDAN (1948-1949): This handsome Frenchman presented boxing with one of its most tragic legends. He won the middleweight championship in 1948, stopping Tony Zale in what became The Fight of the Year. But Cerdan suffered a dislocated shoulder and was forced to surrender his championship to Jake LaMotta in his first defense.

Cerdan returned to the States for a rematch, but an injury to LaMotta forced postponement and Cerdan returned to Europe. On the next trip back his plane crashed and he died at the age of 33.

While Cerdan received no excellent scores, he rated no lower than good in every category. He was a solid, all-around technician who could beat you in several ways.

Cerdan lost just four of 109 fights, one on a foul, winning 60 by knockout. His record against other middleweight champions: Zale (KO12); LaMotta (KO by 10). Elected to the Hall of Fame in 1962.



9. JAKE LAMOTTA (1949-1951): Just one point behind Cerdan is the man who dethroned him, "The Bronx Bull," Giacobe LaMotta.

LaMotta received four perfect scores, in determination, durability, quality of position and historical impact. A controversial figure, LaMotta was immortalized in the recent movie, "The Raging Bull," in which Robert DiNiro provides an outstanding portrayal of the talented, but troubled pugilist. LaMotta's shortcomings were obvious. He paid no attention to defense and footwork was mething for the dance floor. He also was a light puncher, but, like Greb and Walker before him, he was impossible to discourage.

LaMotta won the crown from Cerdan, defended it twice, then was stopped by Robinson in 1951. He continued to fight until 1954, but never received another check at his lost championship.

LaMotta's career produced an 83-19-4 record, 30 of the wins coming by KO. His record against other middleweight champions: Robinson (L10); Robinson (W10); Robinson (L10); Robinson (L12); Cerdan (TKO10); Robinson (TKO by 13). His 1950 defense against France's Laurent Dauthuille was named Fight of the Year as LaMotta, trailing, knocked out Dauthuille with 15 seconds left. Elected to the Hall of Fame in 1985.

JAKE LAMOTTA



10. BOB FITZSIMMONS (1891-1897): Ranked 15th in the heavyweight rankings and 19th as a light heavyweight, "Ruby Robert" earns his highest placing as a middleweight. The 160-pound crown was the first won by Fitzsimmons, who was in his prime at the age of 27 when he knocked out Jack Dempsey "The Nonpareil" in the 13th round to win his first of three world championships.

Though he held the crown six years, he defended it just once before winning the heavyweight title. The Englishman joins Robinson and Ketchel as one of the first three to receive a perfect grade in punching power. And why not? Weighing just 167 pounds he still hit hard enough to flatten James J. Corbett. Hell, legend says it he even knocked out a horse.

As one of just two triple world champions, Fitz gains a 10 in historical importance. And for those who scoff at the abilities of the old-timers, an athlete as exceptional as Fitzsimmons could have adapted successfully to any era's style of fighting. After all, if Abe Lincoln were around today, he'd know how to use typewriter, wouldn't he?

Fitzsimmons finished his career 40-11-3 with 10 no decisions and 32 knockouts. His record against other middleweight champions: Dempsey (TKO13). Elected to the Hall of Fame in 1954.

BOB FITZSIMMONS



11. JACK DEMPSEY (1884-1891): Right behind the premier 10 we find a four-way deadlock for the 11th slot with "The Nonpareil" leading the pack as the world's first middleweight champion.

Dempsey earns one perfect grade, a 10 for his exceptional defensive skills. He won the new crown at the age of 22, knocking out Canadian George Fullames in 22 rounds. After four successful defenses, he was beaten by Fitz. Four years later he tried for the welterweight crown but was stopped in three.

That led to the retirement of Dempsey, who was born John Kelly in Ireland. His record stands 50-3-8 with seven no decisions, three no contests and 26 KOs. Elected to the Hall of Fame in 1954.

JACK DEMPSEY



TONY ZALE



11. TONY ZALE (1941-1947, 1948): Matching Dempsey's score is "The Man of Steel," who provided boxing with many of its unforgettable moments. Zale's courage and strong punching made many of his engagements classics and he receives a 10 in historical importance. Zale claimed the NBA title in 1940, but didn't get recognition as world champion until the close of the following year when he outpointed George Abrams. Zale lost a non-title bout to Billy Conn in 1942, then entered the service, which must have seemed easy compared to what followed the close of World War II.

After tuning up with six straight KO wins in non-title bouts, Zale defended his crown for the first time, knocking out Rocky Graciano in a brawl. Two more slugouts with The Rock saw Zale lose and regain the crown, each time in a sensational KO ending. At the age of 35, The Man of Steel melted at the fists of Cerdan and never fought again.

Zale's log reads 67-18-2 with 45 KOs. His record against other middleweight champs: Soose (L10); Apostoli (W10); Graziano (KO6); Graziano (TKOby6); Graziano (KO3); Cerdan (KOby12). Zale was named Fighter of the Year in 1946 and his matches with Graziano (1946 and 1947) and Cerdan (1948) were named Fight of the Year. Elected to the Hall of Fame in 1958.

RANDY TURPIN



11. RANDY TURPIN (1951): England's Randolph Adolphus Turpin had the misfortune of being around when Robinson was at his peak. But he was good enough to surprise Robby, winning the championship on a 15-round decision.

Turpin's reign lasted just over two months. In a sensational comeback, a badly cut Robinson threw everything he had, which was considerable, and stopped Turpin in the 10th. Turpin gained the British Empire light heavy and middleweight crowns and defended his European laurels before he got a chance to get the world championship back. Robinson had retired, but Turpin lost on points to Bobo Olson in a match to fill the vacancy.

Turpin continued campaigning until 1964, finishing his career 66-8-1 with 45 KOs. His record against other middleweight champs: Robinson (W15); Robinson (TKOby10); Olson (L15). He was shot to death in 1966.

NINO BENVENUTI



11. NINO BENVENUTI (1967, 1968-1970): Turpin had the bad luck of fighting at the same time as Robinson, and Giovanni Benvenuti had Monzon chasing him. Thus, the Italian is often overlooked and underrated.

Consider, he was good enough to win a gold medal in the 1960 Olympics. He won his first 65 pro bouts, a record, before losing his world junior middleweight title to Korea's Ki-Soo Kim. He took two of three bouts with Emile Griffith, winning, losing and regaining the world middleweight championship in the process, the 1967 bout being named Fight of the Year. He defended the crown successfully four times before losing to Monzon in 1970, that year's Fight of the Year. In addition, he was named Fighter of the Year in 1968.

Pretty impressive stuff, huh? His career mark isn't bad, either, standing 82-7-1 with 35 KOs. His record against other middleweight champs: Griffith (W15); Griffith (L15); Griffith (W15); Tiger (L10); Monzon (KOby12); Monzon (TKOby3).

15. TOMMY RYAN (1898-1908): A three-way deadlock occurs at position 15, with Tommy Ryan, born Joseph Youngs, representing the old-timers.

Ryan, the welterweight champion, took on all middleweight comers when Fitzsimmons vacated the middleweight crown after capturing the heavyweight championship. Eventually, Ryan gained recognition as world champion and retained such for a 10-year period.

But Ryan put the crown up for grabs just four times the first five years of his reign and didn't defend it again until he retired with a 86-3-6 record with four no decisions, six no contests and 68 knockouts. His record against other middleweight champions: Dempsey (TKO3); Kid McCoy (KOby15); Kid McCoy (NC5); Kid McCoy (L6). Elected to the Hall of Fame in 1958.

15. WILLIAM JONES (1932): When Mickey Walker retired, the National Boxing Association and the New York Commission couldn't agree on a middleweight champion, causing much the same confusion created for us today by the WBA, WBC and IBF.

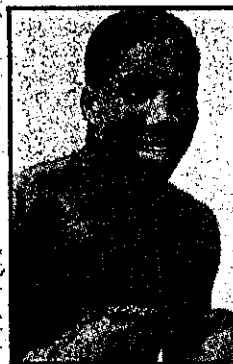


TOMMY RYAN

GORILLA JONES

But Jones came out on top in an NBA tournament and is generally regarded as Walker's successor. "Gorilla's" reign didn't last long, though, as he held the title less than six months before losing by foul to France's Marcel Thil. He never got a chance to get the title back.

Jones fought 145 bouts and was never stopped, earning a grade of 10 for durability. His record was 97-23-13 with nine no decisions, three no contests and 54 knockouts. His record against other middleweight champions: Thil (KO by 11).



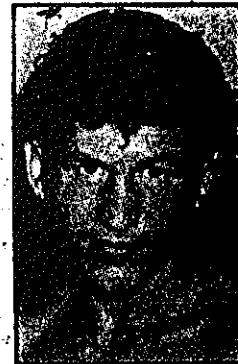
15. JOEY GIARDELLO (1963-1965): Carmine Orlando Tilelli completes the three-way knot at No. 15.

One of the last of the true fighting fighters, Giardello, a masterful boxer, took on everybody in sight and receives a 10 in quality of opposition.

In 1960, Giardello tried for the NBA middleweight title, which was held by Gene Fullmer. The fight was in Fullmer's backyard, but even there the judges had to stretch their imaginations to bless Fullmer with a 15-round draw. It wasn't until almost three years later that Giardello received a shot at the world championship, and he took advantage of it, upsetting Tiger on points.

He defended once successfully, then lost the rematch to Tiger two years later. He continued boxing sparingly until 1967, when he retired with a record of 60-25-7 with one no decision and 32 knockouts. His record against other middleweight champions: Tiger (L10); Tiger (W10); Fullmer (D15); Downes (L10); Robinson (W10); Tiger (W15); Tiger (L15). His 10-round points win over Henry Hank in Philadelphia was named 1962's Fight of the Year.

JOEY GIARDELLO



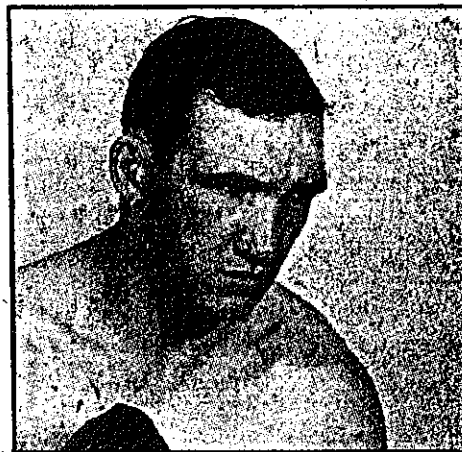
18. GENE FULLMER (1957): Just one-half point behind the above three is Fullmer, one of several middleweight champions to ascend to the throne with a bare minimum of skill.

Fullmer couldn't box and couldn't punch, but rarely has a more durable and determined boxer entered the ring, and he receives 10s in those categories. Fullmer also rates a 10 in quality of opposition as he was willing to go with anyone.

Fullmer's reign as middleweight champion began when he upset Robinson on points. But just five months later, Sugar Ray flattened him and Fullmer never regained the world title. However, Fullmer did remain a force until 1963, winning and losing the NBA title during that period. Fullmer tried for the vacant world championship in 1963, but was stopped by Tiger and retired.

Fullmer finished 55-6-3 with 24 knockouts. His record against other middleweight champions: Pender (W10); Robinson (W15); Robinson (KO by 5); Basilio (TKO 14); Giardello (D15); Basilio (TKO 12); Robinson (D15); Tiger (L15); Tiger (D15); Tiger (TKO by 7). His 14th-round stoppage of Basilio for the vacant NBA title in 1959 was that year's Fight of the Year. Elected to the Hall of Fame in 1974.

GENE FULLMER



19. THEODORE FLOWERS (1926): "Tiger" Flowers, "The Georgia Deacon," heads a group of four tied for the 19th slot, just a half-point behind Fullmer.

Like Fullmer, Flowers met everyone and earns a perfect score in quality of opposition. Also like Fullmer, Flowers lasted less than a year as middleweight kingpin. He won the championship from an aging Greb, beat Greb again to defend it, then lost it later the same year to Walker. He fought 18 times the next year, losing just once, but died during an eye operation four days after his last bout. He was 32.

Flowers was 115-13-6 with 21 no decisions, one no contest and 54 KOs. His record against other middleweight champions: Greb (ND 10); Wilson (TKO 3); Greb (W15); Greb (W15); Walker (L10). Elected to the Hall of Fame in 1971.

TIGER FLOWERS



19. FRED APOSTOLI (1937-1939): Apostoli won the world middleweight championship by stopping Thil, but the New York Commission didn't recognize Thil, backing Freddie Steele instead.

Apostoli erased Steele's claim when he stopped him in an overweight match, and Steele refused to fight him again at 160 pounds.

A solid, all-around boxer, with no outstanding strengths or weaknesses, Apostoli defended his title twice before being stopped by Ceferino Garcia. He fought

Defense
 Determination
 Durability
 Hand Speed
 Foot Work
 Punching Power
 Cut Resistance
 Natural Ability
 Quality of Opposition
 Historical Impact
 Total

CHARTING THE CHAMPS

A few words of explanation about the categories used in deciding *The Ring's* new a time middleweight ratings.

DEFENSE: While this category is self-explanatory, it should be noted that in cases where champion's offense was also his best defense points were awarded based on the overall effectiveness, vis-a-vis defense, of his individual style.

DETERMINATION: Courage, guts, heart, bottom, whatever you want to call it, it all boils down to the same thing: the overpowering will to keep fighting in the face of any odds.

DURABILITY: The champions' chins, stamina and overall conditioning throughout the careers were considered when grading this department.

HAND SPEED: One cannot overstress the importance of hand speed, perhaps the single most important quality any fighter can own.

FOOT WORK: Another vital part of any boxer's repertoire. It should be noted that a champion doesn't necessarily have to be a speed merchant — though it certainly helps — to rate highly in this category.

PUNCHING POWER: The most obvious and dynamic quality a fighter can possess. The effectiveness of combination punching was also factored into this equation.

CUT RESISTANCE: Always a factor, especially today when officials are much more likely to stop a fight because of cuts than in the past.

NATURAL ABILITY: Not only are the champions' God-given talents taken into consideration here, but also the fact that some failed to make the most of their gifts.

QUALITY OF OPPOSITION: It is undeniable that some champs fought in an era blessed with better fighters than other, a criterion that has to be taken into consideration when grading them as a group.

HISTORICAL IMPACT: The champion of an era should be more than just the best fighter in the world at his weight. Ideally, he should also be a larger-than-life figure, one who captures the public's imagination and leaves an indelible impression on the sport.

Ray Robinson	9	10	10	10	10	10	8	10	10	10	97
Carlos Monzon	10	10	10	8	7	9	10	8	10	10	92
Stanley Ketchel	7	10	10	8	6	10	9	9	10	10	89
Emile Griffith	9	10	10	8	8	6	8	9	10	10	88
Harry Greb	6	10	10	9	6	6	7	9	10	10	83
Mickey Walker	6	10	10	8	6	8	7	8	10	9	82
Dick Tiger	9	10	10	6	6	6	8	8	10	9	82
Marcel Cerdan	7	8	8	8	7	8	8	8	7	8	77
Jake LaMotta	5	10	10	6	5	6	6	8	10	10	76
Bob Fitzsimmons	6	8	8	6	4	10	8	6	8	10	74
Jack Dempsey	10	8	8	8	7	5	7	7	6	7	73
Tony Zale	6	8	8	6	6	8	6	7	8	10	73
Randy Turpin	7	8	7	8	8	8	6	8	7	6	73
Nino Benvenuti	8	8	6	8	8	6	8	8	8	5	73
Tommy Ryan	8	8	8	6	6	8	7	7	8	6	72
Gorilla Jones	7	8	10	7	7	6	8	7	7	5	72
Joey Giardello	9	7	9	7	8	6	4	8	10	4	72
Gene Fullmer	6	10	10	6	4	6	7.5	6	10	6	71.5
Tiger Flowers	7	8	6	7	7	6	8	7	10	5	71
Fred Apostoli	8	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	8	6	71
Carmen Basilio	6	10	8	6	5	6	6	6	10	8	71
Rodrigo Valdez	8	7	8	8	8	8	8	8	6	2	71
Paul Pender	10	6	8	8	8	5	8	7	7	2	69
Kid McCoy	8	8	7	7	8	8	6	6	7	3	68
Billy Papke	8	7	7	8	6	6	7	6	8	5	68
Ken Overlin	8	7	8	7	8	4	7	7	8	4	68
Ceferino Garcia	6	7	8	6	6	8	6	6	8	6	67
Billy Soose	8	7	8	8	8	4	8	6	8	2	67
Rocky Graziano	4	8	8	5	4	9	5	6	8	10	67
Bobo Olson	7	7	6	6	6	7	8	7	8	15	67
Johnny Wilson	6	8	8	6	6	6	6	6	8	4	64
Frank Klaus	6	7	7	6	6	6	7	6	10	4	63
George Chip	6	8	8	6	5	4	6	6	10	4	63
Al McCoy	6	8	8	6	5	4	6	6	10	4	63
Alan Minter	6	7	6	8	7	7	4	7	7	4	63
Marcel Thil	6	6	5	6	6	7	8	6	7	5	62
Hugo Corro	7	8	8	6	7	4	7.5	6	15	2	60.5
Vito Antuofermo	5	10	10	5	5	5	2	6	7	4	59
Mike O'Dowd	6	8	8	6	5	6	6	6	6	2	59
Terry Downes	6	8	7	6	4	8	4	6	7	2	58

FRED APOSTOLI

another nine years, but never had a chance to regain his laurels. Apostoli's ledger reads 61-10-1 with 31 KOs. His record against other middleweight champions: Overlin (L10); Thil (TKO10); Garcia (KOby7); Zale (L10); erlin (D10). Named Fighter of the Year in 1943. Elected to the Hall of Fame 1978.

19. CARMEN BASILIO (1957-1958): Matching the point totals of Flowers and Apostoli is another welterweight champion who gave middleweights all they could handle.

In a 13-year career, Basilio met all comers between 136 and 160 pounds and receives a 10 in quality of opposition. His refusal to take a backward step earns other perfect grade in determination.

As welterweight champion, he surprised Robinson, taking Sugar Ray's 160-pound title via decision. The rematch, just six months later, made Basilio an -champ. Fullmer proved too strong in two later bouts for the NBA crown, and Pender ended his career with a points win for Pender's world championship. Basilio was 56-16-7 with 27 knockouts. His record against other middleweight champions: Robinson (W15); Robinson (L15); Fullmer (TKOby14); Fullmer (KOby12); Pender (L15). Basilio notched an amazing record. His welterweight championship TKO over Tony DeMarco was named 1955's Fight of the Year, and Basilio was involved in that honor the next four years, also, winning back the title in 1956 with a stoppage of Johnny Saxton, winning the middle title from Robinson in 1957 and losing it back in 1958, and losing to Fullmer in 1959. He is named Fighter of the Year in 1957 and was added to the Hall of Fame in 1969.



CARMEN BASILIO



RODRIGO VALDEZ

19. RODRIGO VALDEZ (1977-1978): Completing the four-way logjam for this is this talented Colombian, who gave Monzon two of his most bitter battles.

When Valdez dropped and cut Monzon in their rematch, Monzon figured it as time to hand 'em up. Valdez was matched with Bennie Briscoe for the vacant championship and came away a points winner.

However, six months later at the age of 31, he was beaten by Hugo Corro in his first defense, and Corro also won the rematch.

Valdez was stopped just once, early in his career which produced a 63-8-2 record with 41 KOs. His record against other middleweight champions: Monzon (L15); Monzon (L15); Corro (L15); Corro (L15).



PAUL PENDER

23. PAUL PENDER (1960-1961, 1962-1963): As slick a boxer as one would like to see, Pender rates a 10 in defense. But his safety first style did not endear him to the public.

Pender was around at the right time, though, catching Robinson at the tail end of his long career to win the championship by decision. Sugar Ray couldn't catch him in the rematch, either, and Pender defended twice more, beating Basilio and Terry Downes before surprisingly surrendering in his corner in a match with Downes. He got the title back from Downes in 1962, but when negotiations for a match with WBA champ Tiger broke down, Pender retired.

Pender finished 40-6-2 with 20 KOs. His record against other middleweight champions: Fullmer (L10); Robinson (W15); Robinson (W15); Downes (TKO7); Basilio (W15); Downes (TKOby9); Downes (W15).



KID MCCOY

24. CHARLES MCCOY (1897-1898): Leading a three-way tie at 24 is "Kid" McCoy, the third man to hold the middleweight championship.

When Fitzsimmons won the heavyweight championship, the slick-boxing McCoy, inventor of the corkscrew punch, gained recognition as middleweight champ with a TKO of Dan Creedon in 1897. But McCoy never defended the crown, looking at the light heavies and heavies instead. In 1903, he tried for the light heavy crown, but lost on points to Jack Root.

McCoy's record stands 86-6-6 with six no decisions, three no contests and 64 KOs. McCoy's record against other middleweight champions: Ryan (KO15); Ryan (NC5); Ryan (W6). Committed suicide in 1940. Elected to Hall of Fame in 1957.



24. BILLY PAPKE (1908): "The Illinois Thunderbolt" stayed atop the division less than three months. He just couldn't measure Ketchel.

Papke did gain the crown when he ignored the traditional pre-fight handshake

BILLY PAPKE



and floored Ketchel with a right. By the time the first round ended, Ketchel had been down four times and one eye was shut. Papke finally stopped him in 12 but Ketchel gained revenge with an 11th-round KO and repeated his win by decision the next year.

When Ketchel was killed, Papke was one of several strong claimants to the title. But he lost on a foul to Frank Klaus in a 1913 bout to fill the vacancy.

Papke concluded his career 38-9-5 with 10 no decisions and 30 KOs. His record against other middleweight champions: Ketchel (L10); Ketchel (TKO12); Ketchel (KOby11); Ketchel (L20); Klaus (ND6); Klaus (LF15). Elected to Hall of Fame in 1972.

KEN OVERLIN

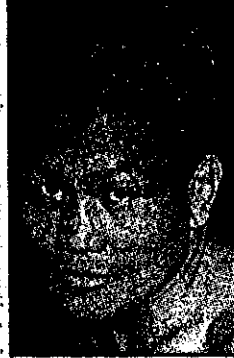


24. KEN OVERLIN (1940-1941): Similar to Pender, Overlin was a cute boxer with little punch whose fights were competitive, but often less than enthralling.

Also like Pender, Overlin fought at a time when confusion cluttered the middleweight championship. Overlin tried for the NBA/NY title in 1937, but was knocked out by Steele. Three years later he took on Garcia, who had won world recognition, and took the championship on points. He defended twice before losing on points to Billy Soose.

Overlin finished 132-16-7 with two no contests and 23 KOs. His record against other middleweight champions: Apostoli (W10); Garcia (W15); Soose (L10); Soose (L15); Apostoli (D10). Overlin died in 1969.

CEFERINO GARCIA



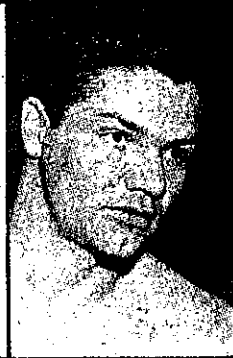
27. CEFERINO GARCIA (1939-1940): Beginning a four-way tie for the 27th position is this colorful Filipino, who tried twice unsuccessfully to win the welterweight crown before gaining the middleweight championship.

Of course, it should be noted Garcia's failures at the 147-pound title came on points losses to Barney Ross and Henry Armstrong.

Standing just 5-7 and rarely weighing more than 154, Garcia still managed to corral the 160-pound crown by knocking out Apostoli. He defended twice successfully, the second match being a draw with Armstrong, who was trying for his fourth world crown, before losing to Overlin on points.

Garcia was 95-26-9 with 65 KOs. His record against other middleweight champions: Apostoli (KO7); Overlin (L15); Soose (TD8). Elected to Hall of Fame in 1977, four years before his death.

BILLY SOOSE



27. BILLY SOOSE (1941): Matching Garcia's point total is Billy Soose whose relatively brief career damages his overall grade.

Soose, a good boxer, won the crown from Overlin, but had trouble making weight and never defended. Having prepared himself at Penn State, he retired the next year at the ripe old age of 26 and never fought again.

Soose finished 34-6-1 with 13 KOs. His record against other middleweight champions: Overlin (W10); Zale (W10); Overlin (W15); Garcia (TD8).

ROCKY GRAZIANO



27. ROCKY GRAZIANO (1947-1948): Seldom has there been a fighter with the popularity of Thomas Rocco Barbella. A wild-swinging power puncher who paid little attention to the game's finer points, Graziano became one of boxing legends and draws a 10 for historical impact.

But Rocky's many obvious shortcomings pull down his grade, and his reign as champion lasted just long enough for Zale to get him back into the ring.

Knocked out by Zale in an unsuccessful bid for the championship, Graziano came back to win the crown by stopping "The Man of Steel." Zale won the rubber match, and that ended Graziano's brief stay atop the division. He tried to regain the crown from Robinson in 1952, but was knocked out in three rounds.

Graziano concluded 67-10-6 with 52 KOs. His record against other middleweight champs: Zale (KOby6); Zale (TKO6); Zale (KOby3); Robinson (KOby6). His June 29, 10-round knockout of Freddie Cochrane was *The Ring's* first Fight of the Year, occurring in 1945. Graziano's 1946 and 1947 encounters with Zale also were named Fight of the Year. Elected to the Hall of Fame in 1971.

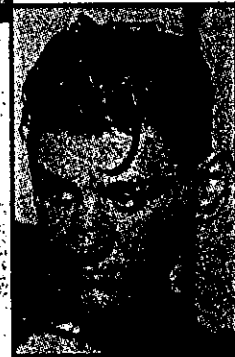
27. CARL OLSON (1953-1955): Completing the four-way jam for position 27 is Hawaiian Bobo Olson, who produced quite a career in spite of his failure to excel in any phase of the game.

When Robinson retired, Olson, who had lost a bid for Robinson's title, was

BOBO OLSON



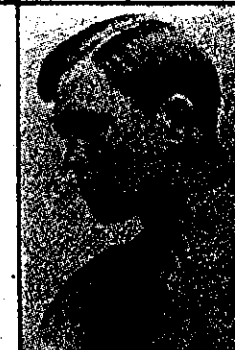
JOHNNY
WILSON



FRANK KLAUS



GEORGE CHIP



AL MCCOY



ched with Paddy Young for the American championship, which Olson won. In the interim, Turpin was winning the European crown from Charley Humez. They met, with Olson winning the vacant championship on points. He defended the title three times, was knocked out in an unsuccessful try for Archie Moore's light heavyweight crown, then lost his middleweight crown when knocked out by the coming Robnison. Olson was again knocked out by Sugar Ray in a rematch. He never fought again for a world championship, but campaigned for 10 more years as a light heavy, retiring at the age of 38 with a log of 99-16-2 with 49 wins. His record against other middleweight champions: Robnison (KOby12); Robnison (L15); Turpin (W15); Robnison (KOby2); Robnison (KOby4). Named Fighter of the Year in 1953.

1. JOHNNY WILSON (1920-1923): Giovanni Francisco Panica was another who fought at a time when the middleweights were without a true leader. Wilson, who often provided his own officials, stripped the crown from Mike O'Dowd in 1920, but the decision created an uproar. However, Wilson gave O'Dowd a rematch the following year and won handily, and also beat Ohio champion Bryan Downey by foul, though the Ohio Commission declared Downey winner by KO and continued to recognize him as world champ. Wilson's rather undistinguished reign came to a close in his second defense when he was beaten on points by Greb. Wilson again was outpointed by Greb when he tried to regain the crown. He fought until 1926, compiling a 64-21-1 record with 35 no decisions, two no contests and 44 KOs. His record against other middleweight champs: O'Dowd (W12); O'Dowd (W15); Greb (L15); Greb (L5); Flowers (KOby3); Greb (L10). Wilson died three years ago in Boston at the age of 92.

2. FRANK KLAUS (1913): Right behind Wilson are four boxers tied for 32nd position, with Klaus first in chronological order. Klaus was one of the many title claimants following Ketchel's death, and served so. He had campaigned nine years against the best without receiving a championship crack. Finally getting a shot at the vacant crown, he emerged world champion when Papke was disqualified in the 15th round. But in his first defense, Klaus was knocked out by George Chip, who repeated the trick in a rematch that sent Klaus into retirement with a record of 49-5-1 with 33 no decisions and 26 KOs. Klaus' record against other middleweight champions: Papke (ND6); Ketchel (D6); Papke (DQ15); Chip (KOby6); Chip (KOby5). Elected to Hall of Fame in 1974.

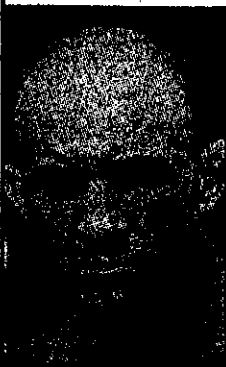
3. GEORGE CHIP (1913-1914): Two of the men tied with Klaus are his conqueror, George Chipulonis, and Chip's conqueror, Al McCoy. Perhaps Chip would have edged ahead of Klaus and a few others if his reign as champion hadn't been so disastrous. After six non-title bouts, Chip put his championship on the line against the unheralded McCoy and was knocked flat in the 11th round. Chip, who earns a 10 for quality of opposition, fought on for eight more years, but never regained the throne, finishing 40-14-1 with 104 no decisions, one no contest and 36 KOs. His record against other middleweight champions: Klaus (KO6); Klaus (KO5); Al McCoy (KOby1); Al McCoy (ND10); Greb (ND6); Al McCoy (ND10); Greb (ND10); Greb (ND10); Greb (ND10). Chip died in 1960 at the age of 72.

4. AL MCCOY (1914-1917): Though he won his championship with a spectacular, one-round KO of Chip, McCoy was a light puncher who receives the lowest grades in punching power and historical importance. McCoy, fighting in the no decision days, could surrender his title only by a knockout loss, and he managed to hold onto it until 1917, when stopped by O'Dowd. Though he fought 45 times during his reign, none were considered defenses. However, his willingness to meet anyone earns him a 10 in quality of opposition. McCoy finished 43-8-13 with 92 no decisions and 25 KOs. His record against other middleweight champs: Chip (KO1); Chip (ND10); Chip (ND10); Greb

ALAN MINTER



MARCEL THIL



HUGO CORRO



VITO ANTUOFERMO



MIKE O'DOWD



(ND10); O'Dowd (KOby6); Greb (ND10); O'Dowd (KOby3). McCoy died in Los Angeles in 1966 at the age of 72.

32. ALAN MINTER (1980): Typical of many British fighters, Minter, a smart boxer with a stiff punch, was held back by his tendency to cut.

Battling another notorious bleeder, Vito Antuofermo, for Vito's world championship, Minter made it the distance to win the championship on points, then stopped Antuofermo in a rematch.

But that proved Minter's only successful defense as Marvin Hagler was waiting in the wings. Hagler stopped Minter in three, starting a mini-riot in Wembley. A violent, racist group was believed to be behind the outburst, and Minter's reputation suffered as a result. But the Brit denied any connection with the racist group, claiming guilt by association, and his explanation is generally accepted.

Minter retired in 1981 with a 39-9 record with one no contest and 23 KOs. His record against other middleweight champions: Griffith (W10); Antuofermo (W15); Antuofermo (TKO8); Hagler (TKOby3).

36. MARCEL THIL (1932-1937): This Frenchman had little in common with Cerdan, save the same first name.

In fact, one wonders if Thil didn't bring along an NBA ref for his title matches. And that's National Basketball Association, not National Boxing Association. After campaigning exclusively in Europe 11 years, Thil suckered Gorilla Jones into defending his world championship in Paris. Naturally, Jones fouled out in the 11th, making Thil champ. He defended the crown nine times — all in Europe. Twice Lou Brouillard was thrown out for fouls in Paris, once in the fourth round, again in the sixth. When Thil finally visited the States, he was stopped by Apostoli and retired without fighting again.

Thil's ledger reads 113-22-13 with 54 KOs. His record against other middleweight champions: Jones (DQ11); Apostoli (TKOby10). Thil died in 1968 at age 64.

37. HUGO CORRO (1978-1979): Like Thil, Hugo Corro preferred the home-court advantage, rarely leaving South America.

But the Argentinian did have the number of Valdez, whom he beat for the title and in a rematch. He sandwiched a successful defense against Ronnie Harris between Valdez bouts, but lost his crown to Antuofermo in 1979.

Corro's scores are pretty decent, but he falls far short in quality of opposition and historical importance, the latter being graded low because of his short tenure and the shadow of Monzon, Argentina's truly great middleweight.

Corro's record stands 48-4-1 with 25 KOs. His record against other middleweight champs: Valdez (W15); Valdez (W15); Antuofermo (L15).

38. VITO ANTUOFERMO (1979-1980): Rarely has a gladiator accomplished so much with so little. Antuofermo couldn't punch, couldn't box and bled at the lacing of a glove. But he overcame those drawbacks with tremendous heart and stamina and earns perfect grades in durability and determination. Being quite proficient at using his head and gloves illegally helped, too.

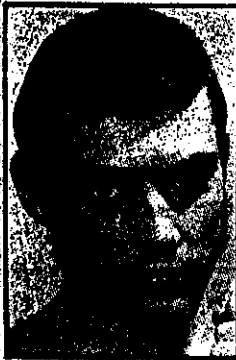
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A comeback was halted in 1985 when Antuofermo was chopped down by young Matthew Hilton, leaving his career mark 50-7-2 with 21 KOs. His record against other middleweight champs: Griffith (W10); Corro (W15); Hagler (D15); Minter (L15); Minter (TKOby8); Hagler (TKOby5).

39. MIKE O'DOWD (1917-1920): "The St. Paul Cyclone" is another who suffers from anonymity, drawing a score of two in historical importance. Judging solely his skill ratings, it's possible O'Dowd would have given many of those rated above him a good tussle.

O'Dowd won the championship in 1917, knocking out Al McCoy. But he relinquished it, in his first defense, a highly disputed decision to Wilson. But

ALAN MINTER



MARCEL THIL



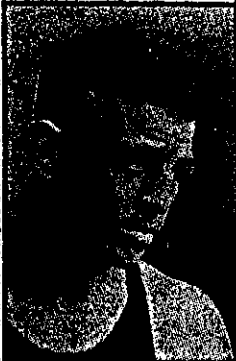
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O'Dowd won the championship in 1917, knocking out Al McCoy. But he relinquished it, in his first defense, a highly disputed decision to Wilson. But

O'Dowd's claim was silenced when Wilson whipped him again, this time convincingly. O'Dowd received New York recognition as world champion in 1922, winning by foul over Dave Rosenberg. However, he was knocked out in one round by Jock Malone in his next start and retired with a 56-7-3 record with 50 no-decisions and 44 KOs. His record against other middleweight champs: Al McCoy (KO6); Greb (ND10); Al McCoy (KO3); Wilson (L12); Wilson (L15). O'Dowd passed away in 1957 at age 62.

40. TERRY DOWNES (1961-1962): Bringing up the rear is England's Terry Downes, a game battler, but also a very fortunate one. Downes, who bled readily, was stopped by Pender in his first bid for the middleweight crown, but caught the champion on a bad night in the rematch, notching his name in the record book with a nine-round TKO. Downes' reign lasted until Pender got him into the ring again, Pender regaining the crown by decision.

Two years later, Downes was stopped by Willie Pasirano in a bid for light-heavy honors and retired 35-9-0 with 28 KOs. His record against other middleweight champions: Tiger (KO6); Gardello (W10); Pender (TKO7); Pender (TKO9); Pender (L15); Robinson (W10).



TERRY DOWNES