

## Ellsworth (Spider) Webb - The Forgotten Middleweight

By Dan Cuoco

Its amazing to me that over the years one of the best middleweights of the fifties has gone unnoticed among veteran fight aficionados. As a young boy, on November 19, 1958, I witnessed Ellsworth (Spider) Webb's complete domination of future hall-of-famer Joey Giardello on national TV. In the years of watching Giardello in action on television and in person I have never seen any other opponent dominate him like Webb did that night. Spider was the quintessential boxer-puncher who engaged in many exciting fights in his forty fight professional career.



Ellsworth Webb was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma on November 20, 1931, one of eleven children. His mother had to work hard to earn a living. The unsupervised Ellsworth got into a lot of street fights as a kid in Tulsa and later in LA where he went to live with his uncle before his mother later joined them. In LA he hung around with Donald Sanders the younger brother of Ed Sanders who later went on to win the 1952 Olympic heavyweight gold medal and tragically died on December 12, 1954 following injuries suffered in a kayo loss to Willie James.

Ed's younger brother talked Ellsworth into going to Compton Junior College with him. Ellsworth went there as a football player. After the football season Ed talked Ellsworth into going out for the boxing team. Ellsworth was a natural. During his two years at Compton he

won NCAA junior titles in 1950 and 1951. Ellsworth received his nickname "Spider" at Compton when a student writer from the college paper saw him in action -all arms, swinging away madly and moving like a spider. After graduating from Compton, Ellsworth followed Ed to Idaho State where he won NCAA light middleweight titles in 1952 and 1953. In four years of college competition he went undefeated in 71 fights, winning 57 of his fights by knockout. Ellsworth was also a member of the great 1952 U.S. Olympic Team that won five gold medals at Helsinki. Unfortunately, he wasn't one of the winners. He had the misfortune of meeting Hungary's legendary Laslo Papp, the 1948 Olympic middleweight gold medalist who also went on to capture gold in the 1952 and 1956 Olympics. Papp, a hard-hitting southpaw, knocked out Webb in the second round. *"I learned something that night-don't get overconfident." "I had him in trouble in the first round and when I went to my corner after the first round I said to myself 'this guy is over-rated. I'll take him easy.' In the second round he nailed me-and good. It seemed like the roof caved in. When I came to the fight was over. I haven't taken an opponent lightly since then."*<sup>1</sup>

After the Olympics Webb returned to Idaho State and repeated as NCAA champion in 1953. His college coach Milton (Dubby) Holt told him that he had the potential to be a topnotch professional fighter and introduced him to Hec Knowles, who had done an excellent job with two other NCAA champions, Chuck Davey and Chuck Speiser. Hec agreed with Holt's assessment of Ellsworth and put him under the tutelage of outstanding Chicago trainer Carl Nelson.

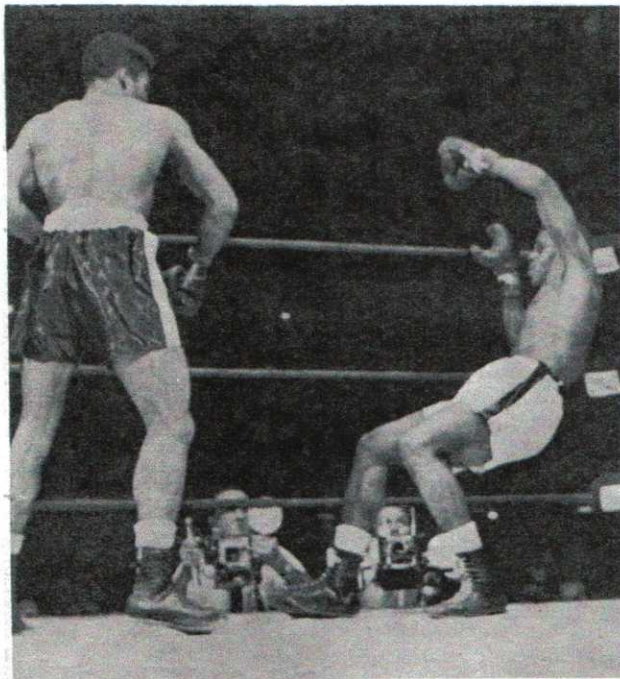
Webb turned professional on July 1, 1953 on the undercard of the Bob Satterfield-Bob Baker fight. He was billed by his nickname "Spider" and disposed of Johnny Williams of Chicago in two rounds. Twelve days later he kayoed Bob Carpenter in the second round. The busy Webb faced Red Elby only nine days later and lost a controversial six round decision. Ellsworth was piping mad over the decision. He got even madder when Elby came into his dressing room and told him he thought the decision went to the

wrong person. But Carl Nelson calmed him down when he told him *"you're in the big stuff now and you've got to act like a big fellow. This isn't college anymore. Sometimes these things happen but you've got to take it as it comes and keep going."* Spider said *"so I learned something, too, in my second defeat."* <sup>2</sup> Spider finished off 1953 by winning six straight fights, four by knockout.

On January 13, 1954, with only nine professional bouts under his belt, Spider took on rugged 73 fight veteran 23-year-old Jimmy Martinez in his first ten rounder in Chicago. Spider surprised everyone by taking Martinez out in the very first round. This was the first stoppage defeat of Martinez' career. Webb proved his stoppage of Martinez was no fluke by again stopping the veteran, this time in six rounds in Martinez' hometown of Phoenix, Arizona.

He followed this victory with a second round knockout over Jesse Fuentes in Phoenix before returning to Chicago to face Chicago's hard-punching Bobby Boyd. Boyd entered the ring on March 17, 1954 spotting an impressive ring record of 27-4-0, with 16 knockouts. Spider scored the biggest victory of his career with a dominant sixth round technical knockout.

Shortly after the fight, Spider was drafted and spent the next two years in the army. He served 11 months in Germany with the 1st Division Combat Engineers and finished up in the states at Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo., and Ft. Lewis, Washington. At Ft. Lewis he was one of the Division's boxing coaches. The other was Charley Joseph, whom he would meet twice professionally two years later.



Discharged in April 1956, Spider went back into training under Nelson. On May 16, he returned to the ring with a one round technical knockout of Irwin Thatch in Chicago. Then followed a six round decision over George Boddie and a 10 round verdict over experienced and high ranking Holly Mims 41-13-5 (10). His win over Mims was his first television start and gained him national attention.

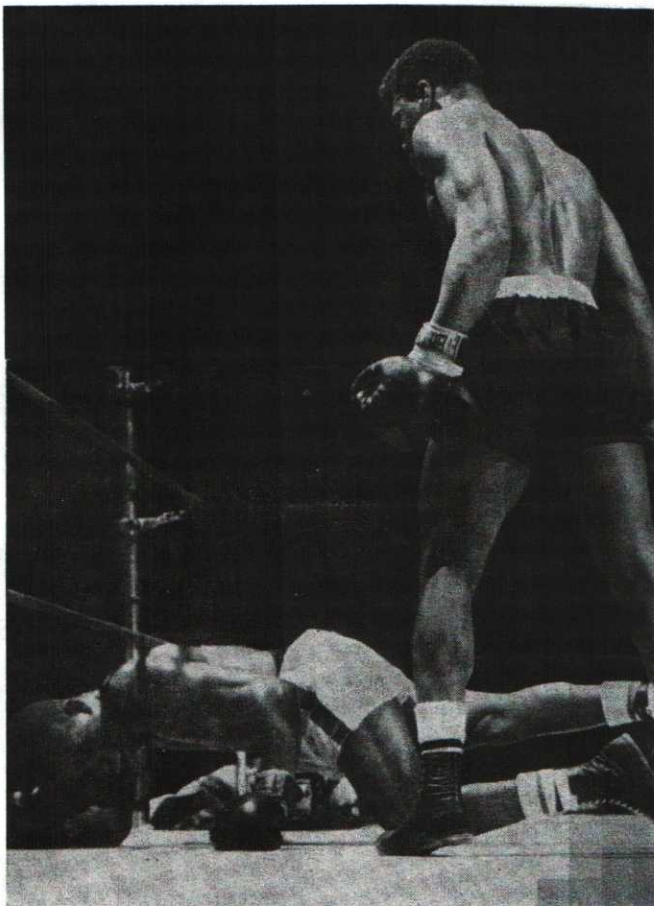
He proved his win over Mims was no fluke by edging undefeated top ranking contender Rory Calhoun 23-0-0 (12) in an exciting battle in Chicago. Webb proved in that fight that he could take a punch. It looked like he was doomed in the third round when Calhoun caught him with a powerful right to the jaw. Calhoun was so certain that he had nailed Spider for keeps that he turned and

walked to a neutral corner. Spider, however, bounced off the ropes like he was a slingshot and tore after Calhoun. They mixed it up so vigorously that both were punching after the bell. His upset over the previously unbeaten Calhoun moved him into "The Ring World Ratings" in seventh place.



Wins over tough Charlie Cotton 40-10-1 (20) fresh off of two decision victories over Joey Giardello and Charley Green 36-20-3 (25) fresh off a kayo victory over Georgie Johnson moved Spider to the

number four spot in "The Ring World Ratings." He finished 1956 off in great fashion with a two round blowout of British Empire middleweight champion Pat McAteer. McAteer, 44-2-0 (21), was down twice in the first round and again twice in the second before the referee mercifully stopped the fight. The victory over McAteer brought Spider's record to an imposing 19-1-0 (12).



On February 15, 1957, Spider made his New York debut at Madison Square Garden with a lop sided decision over eighth ranked Neal Rivers 32-4-1 (18). The fight was savagely fought, with Webb's slick speed and punching power providing the difference in the closing rounds as he battered the game Rivers into helplessness. In the final stanza a thoroughly exhausted Rivers finally went down for a nine-count from the accumulation of punches. The victory cemented Spider's position among the first four leading contenders for Gene Fullmer's middleweight title. He followed this victory with an equally impressive win over Wilfie Greaves in Chicago. Both victories earned him "Fighter of the Month" honors by "The Ring."

On April 17, 1957 Spider solidified his position as the number 3 contender in the world ratings after defeating Randy Sandy in one of the

wildest battles seen in Chicago in years. Sandy, 19-4-1 (7), stood his ground and gave Spider one of the toughest fights of his career. He met Spider punch for punch over the entire ten rounds and only Spider's superior edge in speed provided the difference. Spider won a close decision to run his winning streak to 20.

Two months later Spider traveled to New Orleans to take on his former Army buddy Charley Joseph of New Orleans. Charley was the sixth ranking middleweight in the world and possessed a professional record of 38-5-2 (16). He held victories over Willie Vaughn, Charley Cotton, Milo Savage, Georgie Johnson, Jimmy Beecham, Holly Mims, and Sammy Walker. Joseph scored the most important victory of his career with a unanimous decision in one of the best fights seen in New Orleans in years. Although Spider lost, many at ringside, including Ring Correspondent Ike Morales of New Orleans thought Spider deserved the decision. Morales had Spider ahead six rounds to four. The loss not only snapped Spider's long winning streak; it also cost him his number three ranking. Five weeks later the rivals met in a return match in Chicago. Spider gained revenge as he won a unanimous decision after another hard



fought and interesting fight between the two top ranking contenders.



In Spider' next fight he traveled to Louisville, KY for a tune up against rugged journeyman Jack LaBua. The 24 year-old LaBua had only been stopped once in over 40 professional fights (and that on a cut) against world class fighters such as Gene Fullmer, Rory Calhoun, Gil Turner, Willie Pastrano and Johnny Sullivan. He figured to give Spider a good work out for his upcoming bout with Willie Vaughn scheduled for Madison Square Garden three weeks later. Spider was at his destructive best in this fight. He abandoned his normal feeling out process and starting the fight throwing combinations to both head and body. Suddenly he landed a slashing left hook to the body that stopped LaBua in his tracks, and quickly followed up with a left jab and a

crushing right hand that didn't travel over 12 inches. LaBua went down hard and the fight was over just 59 seconds into the first round.

On November 1, 1957 Spider made his second appearance at Madison Square Garden against Los Angeles' Willie Vaughn, 33-16-6-1 (8). Willie was a 24-year-old veteran that ran hot and cold and was known in the trade as a spoiler. He held victories over Charley Joseph, Hank Davis, Garth Panter, Govan Small, Esau Ferdinand, Charlie Green, and Moses Ward. Some of the fighters he faced and lost to were Carl (Bobo) Olson, Bobby Boyd, Rory Calhoun, Charlie Joseph, and Charlie Green. He also fought draws with Bobby Jones, and Milo Savage. In addition, he also was involved in a no decision with Joey Giardello on March 27, 1957. The fight was originally announced as a split decision win for Vaughn, but was ruled a no decision when it was discovered that the referee's card was incorrectly marked. In his fight with Spider, the aggressive Vaughn set the pace most of the way, but Webb was shiftier, hit harder and counter punched his way to a unanimous decision.

Spider started 1958 off in grand style with a surprising fourth round technical knockout over old adversary Rory Calhoun, then ranked third in the world. The victory earned Spider Calhoun's third spot in the ratings, while Calhoun dropped to sixth. The fight took place on January 20<sup>th</sup> at the San Francisco Cow Palace. Calhoun had been waiting nearly two years to get Webb back in the ring with him. He wanted the fight so badly, he was willing to put his number three rating on the line. Here is the account of the fight as reported by Jerry Mullany for "The Ring."

*"Often the boxing public has to wait all year to find out the biggest fistic surprise of the season. It may be that the outstanding upset of 1958 occurred at the Cow Palace when heavily favored, rock-chinned Rory Calhoun was knocked out in four rounds by clever, but supposedly much less rugged and a comparatively light hitter, Spider Webb. This was the main surprise, but the crowd of 9,332 is still talking about the many ways the form sheet was tossed around. Cagey Webb was expected to tire in the late rounds and lose the decision. But Webb was on the floor for nine in the first round and again for nine in the second. This damage was inflicted by supposedly slow-starting Calhoun. The 7-5 odds against Webb went up to 20-1 at the end of the second. No takers were reported. Webb looked through. Even when he remained erect in the third, he took a heavy body battering from Rory. In the fourth the fans found out what makes boxing the most thrilling of all sports. They saw one mistake in the form of a momentary opening change the entire complexion of the fight. Confident Rory wound up his left to deliver another hook. Webb let go a right that carried all his weight, and caught his opponent coming forward. The punch hit Calhoun flush on the chin, and he was on the floor, a limp heap. Calhoun managed to rise at nine. It looked as if Webb had an open target, but Spider did not rush matters. He circled Rory, then sent in a series of range-finding jabs. The bombshell right which followed again found Rory's chin, and when he went down referee Jack Downey halted the fight without making a count." <sup>3</sup>*

The knockout loss, his first, dropped Calhoun's record to 31-3-1 (16). His only other loss besides the first Webb fight was by decision to Joey Giardello. The draw was with Joey Giambra whom he defeated in a return match.

Spider split his next two fights, losing an upset decision to former victim Holly Mims in Ft. Wayne, Indiana and winning a ten round decision over Jimmy Beecham in Miami Beach, before embarking to London, England to take on Dick Tiger on June 24, 1958.

Tiger, the British Empire Champion was just coming into his own and possessed a professional record of 32-9-1 (17). After starting his career at 14-7-0 (7), Tiger had turned his career around and had gone 18-2-1 (10). His victories included stoppages of future middleweight champion Terry Downes, former British champion Pat McAteer and former conqueror Jimmy Lynas and a points win over another former conqueror Phil Edwards. In one of the best middleweight bouts seen in Britain in years, Webb gave the capacity crowd a brilliant exhibition of boxing and ring generalship in winning a clear cut decision over the aggressive Tiger. Spider was just too cagey for Tiger at this stage of their careers.

Spider returned to New York and stopped Germany's tough Franz Szuzina in seven rounds. Webb worked his way through Szuzina's defense in the first five rounds with needle-threading left jabs that had Franz's head bobbing back and forth. Spider opened Franz up in the sixth round with quick combinations and slugged him unmercifully in the seventh round causing the stoppage. The stoppage was only the second time the 27-year-old Szuzina failed to finish the distance in 73 fights 42-19-12 (23).



Six weeks later Spider took on former middleweight champion Gene Fullmer, the number two ranked middleweight in the world. A victory over Fullmer would have put Spider in position to challenge champion Sugar Ray Robinson for the title. The fight took place in Salt Lake City, Utah, less than 30 miles from Gene's hometown of West Jordan. To avoid the possibility of a hometown decision, three neutral officials were brought in from different states. Fullmer slammed away at the elusive Webb throughout the entire ten rounds and walked away with a unanimous decision. The doggedly determined Fullmer never gave the more stylish

Webb a chance to get into any kind of rhythm. He did all the leading and most of the scoring and consistently outpunched Webb in almost every exchange.

The loss did not hurt Spider's standing among the elite middleweights. Ahead of him in the world ratings were former champions (all future hall-of-famers), Carmen Basilio (#1), Gene Fullmer (#2) and perennial challenger Joey Giardello (#3).

Not one to sit on his laurels, Spider's next fight was with number three ranked Joey Giardello. Joey was a "fighter's fighter." He took on all "comers" and never ducked anyone. The fight figured to be a classic between two crafty boxer-punchers. Joey entered the ring in San Francisco on November 19, 1958 a 2-1 favorite. Boxing Illustrated's Editor in Chief Eddie Borden covered the fight from ringside and reported:



*Spider Webb, 158 3/4, butchered Joey Giardello, 159, for an upset TKO victory in 1:30 of the seventh round. Webb, a 2-1 underdog at fight time, gave a dazzling exhibition of crisp, two-fisted punching that, as early as the third round, had Giardello's face looking like a red balloon. Suffering from bad cuts over and under his left eye, Joey took one of the worst lickings of his career. It was a most impressive performance by the talented Spider."* <sup>4</sup>



Less than a month later Spider flew to London England to take on future middleweight champion Terry Downes. The 22-year-old British champion entered the ring with a record of 17-3-0 (14). The fight took place on December 9, 1958 and Spider came away with a thrilling eighth round technical knockout victory in a fight many British scribes considered Britain's "Fight of the Year."

Here is Ring Correspondent Johnny Sharpe's ringside report of the fight.

*"Take a Bow' Terry Downes of Paddington, for your courageous display against the 3rd ranking middleweight of The World, Ellsworth "Spider" Webb. A crowd of over 10,000 fight fans rose in one to cheer the young British Middleweight Champion and his opponent for one of the best bouts seen during the year of 1958. If this column were given over to the Terry Downes - "Spider" Webb fracas, no one present could find fault, for these two deserved all the space. The referee Eugene Henderson had an easy job, for it was one of the cleanest, yet hectic contests that one could witness. Lets start off from the time that Promoter Jack Solomons announced that he has matched the young British middleweight champion against "Spider" Webb, over 10 rounds, most of the critics (myself included) thought that it was too early to match such promising material against a seasoned performer as Webb, who was ranked third in World Ratings by THE Ring Magazine. This was clearly indicated in the first round, for Downes was almost outclassed by the Chicago battler and was sent down for a count of "eight" from a right to the jaw. Luckily he landed a little, too high. Coming out for the second round, Downes took the initiative forcing Webb to retreat, but the Spider scored with long lefts to the head. How the crowd cheered. In the third when Downes looked like going down from another right to the head, bounded into action with a right to Webb's chin, fighting like fury to pummel Webb with all kinds of blows to the head and body, and he clearly won the round. From then on it was a nip-and-tuck battle. In the sixth, Downes came out of his corner with a do or die attitude that nearly paid off. A right to Webb's head had the latter in a bad way, but Webb fought black vigorously to knock the gumshield from Downes' mouth. In the seventh the writing was, on the wall, for the Britisher suffered a bad cut over his left eye, which seemed to give him a renewed lease of life. His nose was also cut. At the end of the round referee Henderson went to Downes corner and inspected the wounds, but took no action. Webb's experience was now evident, for he paced the hectic battle to a nicety, although he suffered as much as did Downes. Coming up for the eighth, both met in the center of the ring with Downes trying to put on the pressure, but Webb had something in reserve and punished the game Britisher with left books and right crosses to the head. Half way during the round Downes sustained a cut above the right eye, and it was no surprise when the referee again went over to the corner of Downes at the end of the round to inspect the wound. He immediately stopped the bout and raised "Spider" Webb's hand as THE WINNER of one of the best bouts seen in any ring. After the bout Downes said 'If the bout was NOT stopped I would have stepped up the speed to win on points and Webb and trainer Carl Nelson said, 'it was the hardest bout that Webb has taken part in and that Downes shook him up many times, and showed he was ready for a title bout. A rematch would fill Wembley Stadium.'" <sup>5</sup>*



The Spider was on a roll now. He returned to his home base of Chicago determined to stay busy and force the powers to be to grant him a title shot. He began his 1959 campaign by taking on Chicago's Bobby Boyd whom he had defeated prior to going into

the U. S. Army five years before. Boyd had come back from that defeat to score knockout victories over Jimmy Welch, Lloyd Triplett, Tony Anthony, Georgie Johnson, Milo Savage and Jimmy Morris, and outpoint Gene Fullmer, Italo Scortichini, Eduardo Lausse, Holly Mims, Rocky Castellani, Willie Vaughn, Jimmy Beecham and Neal Rivers. He also entered the ring as the number six ranking middleweight in the world. His record was a respectable 51-10-3 (23). Spider was a solid favorite to again defeat Boyd. But even his most avid supporters dreamed that he had the power to stop an opponent as experienced and tough as Bobby so quickly. Boyd came out swinging from his heels



in an effort to gain revenge. He immediately caught Webb with a vicious left hook to the jaw which stunned Spider. Instead of backing away, Spider charged into Boyd and caught him with a four-punch combination to the head that dropped Boyd flat on his face. Boyd staggered up at nine and was dropped almost immediately from another crushing combination. The gutsy Boyd got to his feet at eight but was in no shape to continue and referee Frank Sikora stopped the fight before Spider could land another blow.

Spider's stirring victories over Dick Tiger, Joey Giardello, Terry

Downes and Bobby Boyd were so overwhelming that many of the other top middleweights including the champion were willing to get in the ring with him. Undaunted, his next fight was with another former victim, rugged Neal Rivers. Rivers, who had been in with the cream of the division, had lost a lopsided decision to Spider two years previous. The 24-year-old Rivers entered the ring with a record of 42-9-2 (24) and hopes of springing an upset that would once again vault him into the top ten. Neal was very aggressive and competitive in the first three rounds and almost dropped Spider when he sent him reeling into the ropes near the end of the third round from a short left hook to the jaw. Spider decided not to take any more chances with the dangerous Rivers and came out for the fourth with mean intentions. He quickly got Rivers in trouble with a fuselage of heavy punches and had him in a bad way when the referee was forced to stop the one-sided carnage just before the end of the fourth round.



The fight with Rivers took place on April 22, 1959 and Spider did not step in the ring again until December 22, 1959 when he met National Boxing Association (NBA) middleweight champion Gene Fullmer for the NBA title in Logan, Utah. Fullmer had won the NBA title on August 28, 1959 with a 14 round stoppage of former middleweight champion Carmen Basilio in San Francisco. The NBA had declared the title vacant because of Sugar Ray Robinson's idleness and his reluctance to defend the title against one of the three leading contenders. Robinson hadn't stepped in the ring since winning back the title from Carmen Basilio 19 months prior. To Gene's credit, shortly after winning the NBA version of the middleweight title he immediately signed to meet his outstanding challenger Spider Webb.

For Spider the chance to fight for the title was something he had worked hard to prepare for since his professional debut. He stepped into the ring that night with a professional record of 33-4-0 (19). Beaten previously by Fullmer, Spider was determined



that he would win the return match and the title. Spider acknowledged that Fullmer was very tough, but was wide open and easy to hit. Spider said that he had learned from the mistakes he made in their first meeting and would not make them again. Unfortunately Spider made other mistakes and it cost him. To give you a better perspective of the fight, here is Robert J. Thornton the Managing Director of Boxing Illustrated's report

of the fight. *"As they raised Gene Fullmer's right hand before his hometown crowd, ringside reporters wondered as they often wondered before: how does Fullmer manage to win? But the NBA recognized middleweight champion Gene Fullmer did it again. The pug who does everything wrong in the ring won his 11<sup>th</sup> straight fight; first defense of the title he won by stopping Carmen Basilio. Stumbling over his own feet, throwing punches like a back alley drunk, Fullmer gave challenger Spider Webb little chance to fire his smooth combinations and no chance to catch his breath. For Webb, long a leading contender for the middleweight title, it was a bitter defeat. He allowed Fullmer to bull him around, to tear away at his body and control the pace of the bout. Webb was sleek and graceful at times, but was also overcautious, seemed reluctant to take chances against the charging, snorting powerhouse who never for a moment stopped taking pop shots at his anatomy. Although Fullmer was favored at 7-5, most of the smart money rode on Webb. On the record he was presumed to be the sharper and harder puncher; a guy who can take an opponent out with one shot. He came into the fight riding a crest of four straight victories, including knockouts over Joey Giardello and Bobby Boyd. But Spider's superior skill was offset by the brawling kind of fight slugger Fullmer demanded and got. Although Spider snaked jabs through the champion's high guard and sliced open cuts over and under his right eye, never once did Webb display his vaunted kayo power. It was Fullmer, in fact, who landed the heavier blows, staggering Webb time and time again. Gene constantly tried to pole-axe his victim with wild overhead rights which landed and missed in fairly equal proportion. In the closing rounds Fullmer still packing as much strength and gusto as he did from the start, tried desperately for a knockout, but he missed often with rights, did some damage with follow-up lefts. Just as he did against Basilio, Fullmer had a definite planned strategy which he was able to carry out because of his tremendous strength, endurance and confidence."*<sup>6</sup>



In his first fight back since his losing effort against Fullmer, Spider took on old rival Rory Calhoun in San Francisco on February 26, 1960. This was their third meeting. Like their first two fights, this was a free-swinging action packed bout. Webb was awarded a controversial split decision. Most of the fans, including the attending press had Calhoun ahead in the scoring. The San Francisco Examiner's Eddie Mueller had Calhoun ahead 95-94, and the San Francisco Chronicle's Jack Fiske had Calhoun

ahead 96-92. Webb was floored in the second round by a right uppercut to the chin. His eyes were glazed when he finally made it to his feet with the aid of the ropes. Only his natural instinct and defensive skills saved him from being knocked out. When the round ended he walked to Calhoun's corner and tried to sit down. Calhoun was the determined aggressor throughout the fight. He rocked Spider repeatedly with jolting combinations and in the 10<sup>th</sup> Spider was on the verge of going down again. Even Spider looked surprised when they raised his hand. He stated after the fight that Calhoun was a better fighter than when they last fought and seemed to punch even harder.



Disillusioned by his performances against Fullmer and Calhoun Spider announced his retirement from boxing in July 1960.



On April 15, 1961, fourteen months after retiring, Spider made an ill-advised comeback against the number two ranking middleweight in the world Dick Tiger. This was their second meeting. Spider had decided on Tiger in London in 1958. Then Spider was in his prime, while Tiger was just starting to find himself. When they first fought Tiger tried to outbox the boxer and came out second best. Spider went into the fight rusty and was knocked out by the much improved Tiger in six rounds. Jersey Jones covering the fight for *The Ring* reported: *"Continuing his drive for a chance at the middleweight championship, Dick Tiger, Nigerian holder of the British Empire title, blasted his way to a knockout over Ellsworth (Spider) Webb, Chicago, at 2:41 of the sixth round. It was Webb's first start in 14 months and he couldn't have been given a tougher opponent for his return to ring warfare. The ring-rusty Chicagoan was unable to hold off Tiger's savage assaults,*

*and was dropped in the second and twice more in the sixth. On the final knockdown, Referee Arthur Mercante started to count but at two realized the futility of it all and waved an end to the bout. It was two minutes before the Commission physician and Webb's handlers were able to revive the Spider. It was the first knockout chalked up against Webb in 40 professional outings, and definitely established Tiger as the No. 1 challenger for both sections of the disputed title."* <sup>7</sup>

Spider retired again after his devastating defeat to Tiger and never fought again. His final ring record is an impressive 34-6-0 (19).

In his prime Spider was an all-around fighter who could box as well as punch. He liked to take his time sizing up his opponents before deciding how to launch his attack. He had a rapier left jab and a powerful right cross. He never ducked anyone and was even willing to take on opponents in their own back yard. Although he didn't have the greatest of chins, he was only stopped once and by then he was well past his prime.

His one big weakness in the ring was that he was bothered by strong persistent opponents like Fullmer, Calhoun and Tiger that threw an abundance of punches and wouldn't allow him to get into any kind of rhythm. But in his heyday, he beat some of the best middleweights of his era.

- <sup>1</sup> Rose, M. The Ring, Vol. XXXVI, May 1957, No. 4 "Middleweights Caught in the Webb" (page 9)  
<sup>2</sup> Rose, M. The Ring, Vol. XXXVI, May 1957, No. 4 "Middleweights Caught in the Webb" (page 51)  
<sup>3</sup> Mullany, J. The Ring, Vol XXXVII, April 1958, No. 3 "Ringside Report" (page 43)  
<sup>4</sup> Borden, E. Boxing Illustrated, Vol. 1, March 1959, No 4 "Rings Around the World" (page 9)  
<sup>5</sup> Sharpe, J. The Ring, Vol. XXXVIII, March 1959, No. 2 "News of the British Isles" (page 62)  
<sup>6</sup> Thornton, R. Boxing Illustrated, Vol 2, February 1960, No 2 "Rings Around the World" (page 14)  
<sup>7</sup> Jones, J. The Ring, Vol. XXXX, July 1961, No. 6 "Seen and Heard in New York" (page 55)

### Ellsworth (Spider) Webb

Chicago, ILL., Middleweight  
 Born. November 20, 1931, Tulsa, Okla.  
 Height. 5 ft. 9 1/2 ins.

**Record: 34-6-0 (19)**

<b>1953</b>		<b>1957</b>	
1-Jul Jimmy Johnson, Chicago	KO 2	15-Feb Neal Rivers, New York	W 10
13-Jul Don Carpenter, Chicago	KO 2	13-Mar Wilf Greaves, Chicago	W 10
22-Jul Red Elby, Chicago	L 6	17-Apr Randy Sandy, Chicago	W 10
28-Aug Doug Winslow, Indianapolis	TKO 3	18-Jun Charley Joseph, New Orleans	L 10
14-Sep Billy Sinn, Saginaw	W 6	7-Aug Charley Joseph, Chicago	W 10
1-Oct Lou Barry, Detroit	KO 2	16-Oct Jackie LaBua, Louisville	KO 1
9-Nov Andy Anderson, Ft. Wayne	W 6	1-Nov Willie Vaughn, New York	W 10
15-Dec Lloyd Triplett, Chicago	TKO 3		
29-Dec Jesse Gray, Chicago	TKO 3	<b>1958</b>	
		20-Jan Rory Calhoun, San Francisco	KO 4
<b>1954</b>		12-Mar Holly Mims, Ft. Wayne	L 10
13-Jan Jimmy Martinez, Chicago	KO 1	30-May Jimmy Beecham, Miami Beach	W 10
9-Feb Jimmy Martinez, Phoenix	KO 6	24-Jun Dick Tiger, London	W 10
23-Feb Jesse Fuentes, Phoenix	KO 2	30-Jul Franz Szuzina, New York	TKO 7
17-Mar Bobby Boyd Chicago	TKO 6	11-Sep Gene Fullmer, Salt Lake City	L 10
(In U.S. Army)		19-Nov Joey Giardello, San Francisco	TKO 7
		9-Dec Terry Downes, London	TKO 8
<b>1955</b>			
(In U.S. Army)		<b>1959</b>	
		25-Feb Bobby Boyd, Chicago	TKO 1
<b>1956</b>		22-Apr Neal Rivers, Chicago	TKO 4
16-May Irvin Thatch, Chicago	TKO 1	4-Dec Gene Fullmer, Logan	L 15
6-Jun George Boddie, Chicago	W 6	(N. B. A. Middleweight Title)	
18-Jul Holly Mims, Chicago	W 10		
29-Aug Rory Calhoun, Chicago	W 10	<b>1960</b>	
10-Oct Charlie Cotton, Chicago	W 10	26-Feb Rory Calhoun, San Francisco	W 10
24-Nov Charlie Green, Hollywood	W 10	(Announced retirement in July)	
19-Dec Pat McAteer, Chicago	TKO 2	<b>1961</b>	
		15-Apr Dick Tiger, New York	KO by 6