

# Chester's Rocky Jones

## Local Battler Wins 10-Round Akron Windup

Rocky Jones is due back in Chester tonight from Akron, O. where Thursday night he scored a stunning upset over Roland LaStarza in a ten-round bout.

The Chester heavyweight was a 8-1 underdog before the fight but was awarded the decision by a unanimous vote.

The former Golden Gloves champion's triumph last night was one of the biggest surprises in boxing this year. LaStarza is the fourth ranking heavyweight contender.

### LASTARZA CUT

There were no knockdowns but Jones opened a cut over LaStarza's left eye in the fifth round.

The Chester boy's dazzling boxing exhibition brought offers of a rematch in Cleveland, possibly before a coast-to-coast television audience.

Jones' last start was against Joe Harrison, Los Angeles heavyweight, in the Marciano-Walkoff card at Municipal Stadium Sept. 23. He won a six-round decision.

### MOVES UP

Last night's triumph put Jones high on the list of candidates for a shot at Rocky Marciano's title. Twice before, Jones had cracks at boxing's big time in bouts with Dan Bucceroni, Philadelphia slugger, but muffed both opportunities.

LaStarza, with wins over Gino Bunovino and Cesar Brien to his credit, lost a split decision to Marciano in 1950. LaStarza has been gunning for a shot at the champion on the strength of his showing in that bout.

### LIGHTER BY 11

Jones, 179, was 11 pounds lighter than his New York foe who came in at 190.



Chester's Rocky Jones

## LaStarza Upset By Rocky Jones

AKRON, O., Oct. 9 (AP).—Rocky Jones, 179, of Chester, scored an upset victory tonight by winning a unanimous decision over New York's Roland LaStarza, 190, the Nation's third ranking heavyweight, in a 10-round bout.

LaStarza appeared loggy and slow after a five-month layoff. A slim crowd of about 1400 paid a gross of around \$3000 to see the fight.

Jones opened a cut over the New Yorker's eye in the fifth round and the eye dripped blood and bothered LaStarza for the rest of the bout. He protested bitterly about the blow after the fight, claiming Jones butted him.

There were no knockdowns and neither fighter was in danger. Jones, shifty and fast, scored effectively with a left jab and a looping right.

LaStarza's best round probably was the ninth when he backed Jones into a corner and pounded him with both hands. The Chesterite fought his way out, however, and was storming back at LaStarza when the bell sounded.

For what its worth - I believe Roland LaStarza was one of the most over-rated heavyweights in history. Most of his reputation is based on the first Marciano fight, Rocky's first bout after the traumatic Vingo match. The record of LaStarza shows few bouts with top rated competition.

# LaStarza 3-1 Choice

## Chester Boxer Bids for 2nd Upset Victory

Rocky Jones, Chester heavy-weight, was a 3-1 underdog in his return match tonight with Roland LaStarza at Brooklyn's Eastern Parkway Arena.

Jones, a comparative unknown, won an upset decision over LaStarza, fourth-ranking contender for the heavyweight crown, in Akron (O.) seven weeks ago.

Previously, LaStarza had lost only to Rocky Marciano, now the heavyweight king, and to Dan Saccoroni, whom he licked in a return scrap.

Jones left Chester Sunday afternoon for the Hotel Edison in New York, which will be his headquarters until fight time. The Chester boxer was joined Sunday evening by manager Frankie Green and trainer Alec Boulden.

### TELEvised IN NEW YORK

The fight is scheduled for 10 p.m. and will be televised in the New York area.

After his surprise victory over the New Yorker last month, Jones was sought by promoters from all parts of the country. The best bid was a return match with LaStarza in the Brooklyn ring.

Jones, who went back into training immediately after his Akron score, is confident he can repeat over the highly-regarded New Yorker.

### BEAT HARRISON

Before his victory over LaStarza, Jones had registered a decision over Tommy Harrison, Los Angeles battler, in Philadelphia. Harrison later scored a decision over Jimmy Bivins.

No novice, Jones has fought Curt Kennedy, Danny Nardico, Freddie Beahore, Jimmy Rouse and other seasoned ringmen.

A frequent attraction at Lloyd Field a year ago, Jones scored a sensational victory here two summers back when he stopped Ted Calaman, premiering Philadelphia heavyweight, in five rounds.

## LaStarza Wins Chester Boxer Decks Favorite in 2d, Fades

By BOB FINUCANE

BROOKLYN, N. Y.—Chester's Rocky Jones ripped open Roland LaStarza's left eye in the first round, floored him in the second to the screeching surprise of 3000 partisan fans but lost the 10-round decision here Monday night at the Eastern Parkway Arena.

LaStarza's triumph reversed a seven-week-old upset win Jones scored over the nation's fourth-ranking heavyweight fighter in Akron (O.) Oct. 8.

Although outweigh 11½ pounds and a 3-1 underdog in the betting, Jones appeared ready to repeat over LaStarza in the first two rounds. Three right hands opened a cut on the outside corner of LaStarza's left eye in the first round and a vicious left hook in the second sent him to the deck for a count of two.

But in the third, LaStarza came back to drop Jones for a three-count with a straight right to the jaw and from that moment on LaStarza was in command.

### BLOODY MESS

The New Yorker's eye leaked blood in almost every round, particularly in the 10th, and he left the ring looking more like a badly-beaten loser than a unanimous winner.

Referee Ray Miller scored it 7-3-1; Judge Bert Grant 7-3 and Judge Charles Shortwell saw it 9-1. The United Press scored it 7-3-1 while the writer's card saw it 6-3-2.

Jones had been promised a shot at Rex Layne in Salt Lake City if he could make it two in a row over LaStarza, with a possible shot at heavyweight champion Rocky Marciano riding on the outcome.

### WANTS LAYNE

Today, it was LaStarza who was yelling for a Layne bout and Teddy Brenner, matchmaker at the Parkway Arena, said he'll offer Layne \$10,000 to fight LaStarza here.

Despite his loss last night, Jones is figured still in the picture as far as good bouts in the New York area are concerned.

Off to a poor start—an old cut was reopened over his left eye in the first and a left hook to the jaw dumped him in the second—Roland LaStarza, 189½, Bronx, got going in the third when he returned the knockdown and went on from there to box and punch his way to a unanimous decision over Rocky Jones, 178, Chester, Pa., in ten at the Eastern Parkway. The result squared accounts for a surprise verdict LaStarza blew to Jones in Akron several weeks before, and gave roly-poly Rollie the distinction of having evened up two of the three defeats chalked against him in 55 pro starts. The one sneer still on his record was the split decision he dropped to Rocky Marciano in Madison Square Garden early in 1950. Jimmy Carlini, 148, Philadelphia, outpointed Carlin Scott, 146½, Bronx, in the semi-final six. Don Braun, 143½, Baltimore, came back from a rough first round to outslug Armando Yanes, 137½, Colombia, South America, in another six. In four, Jack LaBua, 157½, Jake LaMotta's protegee, whipped Jimmy Pruitt, 150½, Spartanburg, S. C.; Eddie Williams, 147, Brooklyn, won from Pat Gallagher, 152, Bronx, and Dennis Cronin, 173½, New Brunswick, N. J., stopped Pete Taro, 174½, Coney Island, at 1:22 of the first.

## La Starza, Felled in 2d, Whips Jones

BROOKLYN, Dec. 1 (AP).—Rolanda La Starza, 189½, ex-City College athlete who hopes to get a shot at the heavyweight title, came off the canvas tonight to win a unanimous 10-round decision over Fred (Rocky) Jones, 178, Chester, Pa. La Starza is the fourth-ranking heavyweight.

A crowd of 3000 at Eastern Parkway Arena saw Jones, who won a unanimous decision over La Starza seven weeks ago, catch Rollie off balance in the second round with a left hook. La Starza went down, was up at the count of two, but was forced to take the mandatory eight-count by Referee Ray Miller.

Referee Miller gave La Starza seven rounds, Jones two and called one even. Judge Charlie Shortell had it 9-1 and Judge Bert Grant, 7-3.

# 'Rocky' retold

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# - Chester-style

By  
ED  
GEBHART

1991

Long before anyone ever heard of Sylvester Stallone ... long before there was a Rocky I, II, III and IV ... there was a Rocky living in Chester.

His name is Rocky Jones and his story is as improbable as the one the Hollywood writers put on the screen ... maybe even more improbable. And just like the Rocky celluloid stories, Rocky Jones' tale has a happy ending, too.

The story begins in Ohio where Rocky Jones was raised in an orphanage. It has ended, temporarily, on a neat, well-kept home on Fulton Street in Chester, about halfway between Chester High and Columbus Middle School, where Rocky Jones resides with his wife and where their six children are frequent visitors.

There aren't many mementos of the days when Rocky Jones was the seventh ranked light heavyweight contender in all the world ... just a few old Ring magazines and some faded newspaper clippings.

There is, however, a chipper's gun, of all things, neatly bronzed and in a glass case with the inscription, "Rocky Chipper Jones." The chipper's gun and the jackhammer were the tools that Rocky, now nearing 70, used throughout his adult life. The bronze model was given to him last June when he retired after working 23 years on the construction crew at Scott Paper.

Nobody, it was said when he retired, ever gave you a better day's work than Rocky Jones.

Rocky first came to Chester in 1948, after serving four years in the army, much of it as an infantryman in Italy during World War II. He came here because an officer, aware of his boxing talents, told him Chester was the place to be if he wanted to turn professional.

In Chester, Rocky lived in the Fairgrounds Project, took a job at Penn Steel, and began to box. He found a trainer in the legendary Alec Boulden.

Although never weighing more than 175 pounds, Rocky Jones fought mostly as a heavyweight. He was on the undercard of the title bout between another Rocky Marciano, and Jersey Joe Walcott before 40,000 fans at Philadelphia's Municipal Stadium. That night, Rocky soundly whipped Tommy Harrison, a Marciano stablemate who always gave the Brockton Bomber fits in sparring sessions.

On the strength of that performance, Jones was booked into Akron, Ohio, to fight Roland LaStarza, then the No. 1-rated heavyweight contender. LaStarza recently had lost a close decision to Marciano, and was tuning up for a rematch.

LaStarza, at 198, was a 10-1 favorite over Rocky, a well-muscled 173½.

Before the fight, Alec took Rocky aside.

"Rocky," he said, "They tell me we gotta do business in this fight. LaStarza has to win."

"Mr. B," Rocky replied, "LaStarza's a heavyweight. I'm way under him. I'm just gonna try and keep him off me. But if he hits me and hurts me, I'm gonna be all over his case!"

Rocky did, indeed, get all over LaStarza's case. He scored a unanimous upset decision that stunned the boxing world and greatly disturbed the men who controlled the game in those days. Naturally, the public demanded a rematch.

If Rocky could beat LaStarza again, he'd earn a shot at Marciano.

So how did Rocky Jones train for the fight of his life?

Well, neither Boulden nor Jones were what you would call well off. Jones' paycheck for whipping LaStarza was \$500. Rocky never had the luxury of just being a fighter. He still had to work with the jackhammer each day at Penn Steel to support his family.

After putting in his eight hours, Rocky would report to Alec's "gym." if you want to call it that. Alec operated out of a little shack on Union Street between Flower and Edwards. The ceiling was so low there was barely enough room to skip rope.

Heat was supplied by a pot-bellied stove. A 40-watt bulb, hanging from the ceiling, provided light. A heavy bag and a speed bag were the only equipment. A mat on the floor substituted for the ring.

The only roadwork Rocky did was on weekends.

Thus prepared, Rocky went up to St. Nicholas Arena for his nationally televised rematch with LaStarza.

Before the fight, a man named Jimmy White, approached Rocky. Jones knew him as a "contact man" for the Vito Genovese family.

"We don't want any of that stuff you pulled in Akron," Jones was told. Rocky didn't reply.

The fight started and Rocky won the first round. In the second, a savage right sent LaStarza crashing to the canvas. He barely beat the count. Fame and fortune appeared to be within Rocky's grasp.

But before the third round, Jones got another message.

"Rocky," he was told, "LaStarza wins the next eight rounds."

And he did.

And four fights later, Rocky retired from the ring.

He may not have had a college education, but he was smart enough to know what happened to people who crossed the mob.

Rocky Jones could be a bitter man. But that would be out of character for this gentle, friendly man with the perpetual smile and constant upbeat attitude. That smile, by the way, brightens a face completely free of any souvenirs of his ring wars. Rocky looks 20 years younger than his 69 years.

"I have no regrets," he said. "Just as long as I ended up with all my marbles and the fine family I have.

"My family gives me a lot of contentment. Every one of my children is just great. None ever gave me a minute's trouble. You just have to be proud of them."

That's Chester's "Rocky," a true champion afterall.

Ed Gebhart is a public relations executive for a major corporation. His column runs Friday.