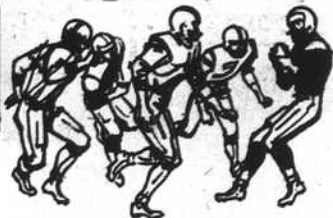


## SPORTS



# Chuck Harris

## Ringside At The Fight Of The Century

(Editor's note: In the former "hypothetical" bouts staged by sportswriter Harris between present-day Heavyweight Champ Muhammad Ali and ring champs of yesteryear, Harris neatly disposed of all other former greats by having Ali emerge the undisputed "greatest" in one column. Not so with this match between Joe Louis and Ali... Last week's column concluded with both fighters holding their own as the readers were left hanging on the ropes from suspense at the end of Round 3--Continued now is Chuck's blow-by-blow description of history's greatest title fight)

Round (4) Louis shuffles speedily into center of the ring and is met with two whistling rights that, for a second, seemed to bewilder the Brown Bomber--Now, Muhammad circles Joe, jabs Louis with two lightning-like punches to the left side of Louis's face--Now, digs a short, hard, chopping right to Joe's mid-section... The Bomber grabs and holds on - Referee Donovan breaks the two gladiators - And Wow - suddenly with punches, seemingly, out of nowhere, Louis bangs Muhammad with two straight rights to the body, a straight, hard, stabbing left jab to the face--as the bell rings... Yes, that was a good round for Muhammad Ali who seems to look prettier as the rounds go by.

OVER IN Joe's corner, Joe's faithful trainer, Chappie Blackburn, considered by many experts of the game to be one of the greatest, if not the greatest, is now working very cool with Joe, and climbs down the steps as the bell rings for

Round (5) Louis circles Ali as the smiling Muhammad now circles Louis--touches his gloves and backs away from Louis, moving from one side to another in an obvious attempt to befuddle the Bomber--Now he grabs Louis and holds his arms without throwing a punch. Joe side steps Muhammad and bangs two sweeping right hands to Ali's body--Very seldom does the Bomber do this, but Joe is doing things tonight we never have seen him do... Now, two more punishing rights to Muhammad's body--Muhammad jumps in and out throwing two of those lightning-like jabs to Louis's face... Louis retaliates with a hard left hook to Muhammad's body as the bell sounds ending round 5.

Now, over in Muhammad's corner, his faithful trainer (a good competitor in his own right) seems to be arguing with Ali who gets up from his stool and walks away and stands near the center of the ropes... He appears to be really peeved as the bell sounds for round 6.

Round (6) Louis, with his cat-like shuffle, this time comes straight at Muhammad... As Ali gets in punching distance of Louis's face, he feints and backs away with neither landing a punch... Louis leans to the side and with the speed of lightning, it seems, catches Muhammad with two left hooks to the body and a light jab to the face--not much damage done because Ali was moving with the punches... Now Ali stabs light jabs to Joe's face as Louis was moving away--Louis back with two jabs to Muhammad's body and head - now a right too high above Ali's head to do much damage... Muhammad moves to his right and bangs Joe with two bashing left hooks to the body as the bell rings.

BELIEVE IT or not, both of these great champions have a lot of respect for each other. So far, neither one has fully opened up, but you can bet before it's over, there will be a lot of

fireworks.

Round (7) Muhammad quickly rushes from his corner, starts straight toward Joe and then, with the lithe dancer-like foot action characteristic of him, side steps to his left, then to his right, and places two hard jabs at Joe's chin--back with another hard jab to Louis's body, then another to the head, all without a counter blow from Louis... Now Joe corners Muhammad and bangs two pile-driving rights and a left to Ali's body--back with a chopping right to Ali's head and another left and right to Muhammad's mouth... Ali desperately tries to grab Louis and hold on as Louis savagely pushes him away... Ali now dances from side to side, doing all he can to get out of the corner as Louis lets go a one-two to the chin that travels only about six inches and Muhammad goes to one knee--As referee Donovan begins to count--the bell.

This crowd of 76,000 roaring, howling fans are going wild as Ali's corner is furious with activity--Muhammad's trainer, Dundee is massaging Ali's rubbery legs with all the experience and know-how at his command... Over in Louis's corner, Blackburn coolly explains to Joe just how he should continue to fight Muhammad Ali as the bell sounds for

Round (8) Louis, still with that dead-pan expression, shuffles to the side and bangs Muhammad with a short chopping left to the body--Ali moves away speedily as the punch barely lands--Louis is at his deadliest and obviously trying for the kill as an apparent desperate Ali is cornered--but a too anxious Louis throws punches wild of the mark as Muhammad feints Joe, now grabs him by one hand and partly pulls him into the corner, and with punches thrown with unbelievable speed, bangs two right hooks to Joe's body--now back with two smashing left hooks to Joe's face and again, with no return, places a one-two on Joe's chin... Now the Brown Bomber tries to grab Muhammad and hold on but to no avail--Now Muhammad, with the famous Ali shuffle, lets go with three short left hooks and a one-two to Louis's face. Louis, in desperation, tries to grab Ali around the body but is hit with another lightning one-two and Joe is down on one knee as the bell rings.

WHAT A comeback for Muhammad Ali.... After it seemed he was nearly done, Muhammad has proven that, not only can he take it, but he has all the killer instinct needed when the time beckons... Believe you - me, these two great adversaries are proving tonight to be two of the greatest to ever enter a ring... As we look over in Louis's corner, Chappie Blackburn seems to have lost his cool and is now yelling to Joe as never before.

Watch for next week's issue - Beginning with Round 9 of the Fight of the Century and its final outcome.

Well, to nearly everyone's expectations and satisfaction, the Philadelphia 76ers downed Basketball's invincible champions, the Boston Celtics 4 games to 1... But Bill Russell, in his first year as coach did a commendable job winning more games in his first year as coach than anyone had before and kept them on top to go into the play-offs... Now a salute is due to Wilt Chamberlain and Company, Eastern Champs who, at this writing, was leading Western Champs, the San Francisco Warriors, by one full game.

## Another Ring Champ

CLOVIS, N.M.--A Clovis high school senior, who as a boxer may be world champion one day, has been praised by Jack Howard, Administrator, U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Work Programs, for winning the National Golden Gloves 125-pound title.

"I want to congratulate you on your triumph in the Golden Gloves Championship in Milwaukee last month," said Howard in a letter to Brook Byrd, 18, of 109 Merriweather.

Writing on behalf of the Neighborhood Youth Corps, a Labor Department administered program in the anti-poverty campaign, Howard said:

"ALL OF US in the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Work Programs are very proud that one of our Neighborhood Youth Corps enrollees is doing so well. Your coach, Bob Stephens, tells us that you have won 90 matches out of 92. That is a spendid record. Keep up the good work. Let me wish you the best of luck in the National AAU Tournament in San Diego next month and at the Pan American trials in July."

Stephens, a state juvenile officer in Clovis, rates Byrd's chances as a pro fighter as very high. "I guess you couldn't call him another Joe Louis physically," he said, when asked to compare him with the former heavyweight champ, who also came up via the Golden Gloves route. "Brook's not heavy enough. He'll probably never go much over 147, which would make him a welterweight."

That would put him in the same class as Henry Armstrong, who in the late 30's won the lightweight, welterweight and middleweight crowns in succession. He was the only man in boxing history to hold three titles.

STEPHENS WASN'T willing to go quite that far, but he thinks Byrd could win the welterweight crown. "Brook has enough ability to be a world champion," he said. "He's a great fighter and beyond that a great boxer. He fought his last five bouts with a bad cut over his eye. So he had to go up on his toes and box, rather than slug, and he proved he could do that by winning all five bouts."

In one respect, there is a possible parallel with the present heavyweight title-holder. Stephens believes that Byrd could go all the way if he got the same kind of home town support Cassius Clay enjoyed. After Clay won the Golden Gloves crown, he was taken in hand by a group of Louisville businessmen who financed and guided him as he battled his way up the ladder, making him world champ and a wealthy man.

Stephens sees no reason why the same thing couldn't happen to Byrd. "He's an excellent boy," he said. "He's quiet and his attitude is good. All he needs is a break or two."

STEPHENS AND the Neighborhood Youth Corps have already given him a break or two. Under the auspices of the Debaca Development Council of Fort Sumner, N.M., which manages the NYC programs for this area, Byrd works 10 hours a week at Clovis High, where he is a senior. He does maintenance and landscaping work, as part of the NYC's work-training program to prepare youngsters for jobs at the same time that it improves a community facility and gives the boy a chance to earn while he learns. He's been on the job since September--and in a family of nine boys and girls, the extra cash comes in handy. "The money sure helps out," said Byrd. "I'm able to pay my own bills instead of asking my parents." (His dad works for the City of Clovis). He's grateful to Stephens, too, who is the juvenile probation officer for the Ninth Judicial District of New Mexico.

Besides his fighters, Stephens has high praise for his assistant, Chuck Haas, and for the Neighborhood Youth Corps. "NYC certainly has proved to be a big help to Brook Byrd," he said. "As a juvenile officer, I can tell you that any time a boy has a job, he's not nearly so apt to get into trouble."

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