

Levinsky Fight Proved Carnera Was Turning Point in Louis' Career

By P. L. PRATTIS (For The Associated Negro Press)

Chicago, Aug. 15—When Joe Louis, Detroit's heavyweight fighter to the white gentlemen in New York and Chicago who promote prize fights, pounded out a smashing two-minute victory over King Levinsky at Cominsky park last Wednesday evening before 39,195 rabid, yelling fans, his tom tom fists carried a curt, pre-emptory message to all other heavyweights, white and black.

"Get out of my way—I mean business!" said the Louis' Maulers for their owner. Thousands of charged and livid words have pranced over the telegraph wires designed to describe the downfall of the Kingfish and full credit has been given to the Brown Bomber, but the aftermath of the battle is contained in the "Clear the way" command of the sledge hammer blows which cut the head of the Kingfish down.

Before the Levinsky fight, some reporters, eager for an angle of exploitation, criticized the Louis training methods. They said his sparmates were hams. This writer thought they were heroes. One round each they went with him at each session, one round if they could last. But most of them could not last. For five dollars, they volunteered to be knocked unconscious. Do you think that's an easy job? How would you like to tell somebody, "Well, I worked hard last week—I was knocked unconscious three times?"

Louis did his real training for the Levinsky fight in the Yankee Stadium against Primo Carnera. When he had chopped the giant oak of Lombardy down, he was ready then for the mighty Kingfish. After that fight, Louis was through with his tests in the prize ring.

There be those who will boast of their exploit in going the limit with the Brown Bomber. Four men will tell that story to their grandchildren if the effects of the beating they took from Louis allow them to live that long. They are Adolph Wiater, Jack Kranz, Patsi Peronni and Natie Brown. What a tale for these last two: "I stayed ten rounds with him when he was in his prime!"

Eager readers, believe not a word of it. This writer has seen nearly all of Joe Louis' fights. He started observing Joe as an amateur. He predicted after Joe's first professional fight that he'd catch up with Max Baer in less than two years. It took Joe only one year. The boasts of the guys who went the limit with Joe Lou-

is are hollow save for a stuffing of vanity. Believe this writer when he tells you that neither Patsi Peronni nor Natie Brown could either last more than two rounds with the Joe Louis of today. Believe him when he tells you that neither could have lasted at any time if Joe had been told to plaster them to the floor at any cost. No, blood brothers, they could not have done it.

Up until the Carnera fight, Joe Louis was taking his examinations in the prize ring. He was young, he was new, he was green (lacking in experience). Remember how Jack Johnson said Carnera would beat him because he lacked experience? There was something to the dope that Joe had better be on the lookout for the tricks of the crafty old veterans of the ring. Joe was like any youngster learning. He had his eyes open to learn. His friends, his trainer and his managers, all cautioned him. Nobody wanted to see him through ignorance, become the victim of a trick that would spoil his career. He had the strength, the power and the skill. Why run the risk of losing a million dollars by some rash oversight in the ring.

So, for one year, up until the Carnera fight, Joe took his lessons in ring craft. If an opponent went down and stayed from the effect of one of Joe's blasts, that was all right, but that was not the Bomber's set design. He didn't rush himself to finish them. Remember how he floored Birkie in the early rounds of a fight at Pittsburgh, then coasted to give the German a boxing lesson? That was a good chance to learn something from one of the veterans. In the final round, he closed in and polished his man off.

Remember the Natie Brown fight? Remember how Brown struck his head outside the ropes to keep Louis from hitting him? Remember how the referee stayed in Joe's way? Remember how Brown gave the Bomber nothing but the top of his head to hit at? Remember how gentlemanly the White Knight of the ring was, stepping back to give Brown a chance?

And do you remember the two Ramage fights? The first one went eight rounds. Ramage, the master boxer, kept a left jab in Joe's face. Before the first fight, Louis did not know what Ramage might do to him. He knew he was a skillful boxer, but did not know the weight of his blows. There was no sense in him laying himself open to a chance blow from the coast boxer. In the eighth round, he caught up with him and set him on his pants. In Los Angeles, a few weeks later, it took him only two rounds. He had learned much from the first fight; above all, knew that he had nothing to fear from Ramage.

But Carnera was really question Number Ten in Joe's examination of himself as a prizefighter. Here was a giant hulk of a man who had been a champion. He possessed size, height, reach, strength and some skill. He was known to be, not only tricky in the ring, but "dirty" also. He'll step on your feet and sock you," they warned Joe. "He'll maul and wrestle you until you are tired," others cautioned. He was told that it would be difficult to reach the giant's chin. He had the example of Carnera's stand against Baer as a test of the toughness and recuperative powers. Question Number Ten was really the key to Joe's examination of himself. The correct answer to it was to prove to him and to his handlers his real powers. So he took his pencil from behind his ear, scratched his head and figured out the answer.

The first knockdown of Carnera in the sixth round at Yankee Stadium was a red light stop sign for King Levinsky.

Who was this guy Levinsky, known as the mighty fish peddler? He was an old hometown war horse. Many a good fighter of championship class had come to Chicago to have his career blotted by this fish monger. Jack Sharkey had been knocked down. Mickey Walker, Tommy Loughran, Leo Iomski and numerous

others had been knocked out. Jack Dempsey had been beaten by him.

Many were they who had stood up before the Kingfish only to regret it afterwards. Not a skilled boxer, he possessed a wild right, filled with TNT. It came from everywhere and was apt to land anywhere. If it landed on his opponent's jaw, the opponent landed on the floor. Furthermore, this Levinsky was tough and courageous. Only twice before the Louis fight had he been knocked down. Once, in a fight early in his career, Ted Ross upset him and the Kingfish attempted to run out of the ring. The other time was last winter when Max Baer knocked him out in two rounds.

But against other fighters, Levinsky had caught all they could pitch and had done some pitching in his own behalf. He was the kind of a fighter who did his best under pressure, who countered with his right swings when he was struck.

What was Joe Louis going to do against a man like this? Suppose Joe did hit him? Would not the Kingfish retaliate in a fury and smash the Bomber to the canvas? Few fans in Chicago believed Levinsky could win against Louis, but you could not have picked up any money betting that the Kingfish would not knock Louis down. It was 'in the cards' that Joe was to be set on his pants at least once. "What will you do if he knocks you down?" asked Wilfred Smith of the Chicago Tribune. "I'll get up," replied Joe. Even Benny Leonard, who thinks Joe is an invention in the fighting game, felt Levinsky might floor Joe. "But he'll get up," asserted Leonard.

Well, the Kingfish did not knock Joe down. Joe passed his examination with a mark of E plus.

The Joe Louis who met King Levinsky was a different Joe Louis from the one who defeated Carnera, Ramage, Birkie, Peronni and the flock of others. He was a fighter with the same power and strength and skill, but in the Carnera bout he had passed his test in psychology and ring craft.

That is why 40,000 paid customers saw the quickest knock-out in Joe's ring career. Many fighters inferior to Levinsky had stayed longer with Joe, but none of them had met the Joe Louis whom the Kingfish faced. The Hebrew lad can take some consolation out of that thought.

Against Levinsky, Louis was not only the powerful Bomber and the master boxer. He added fury to his work. He was a frenzied tiger, eager to kill. He cared not a wot for ring tricks, for the other man in the ring. The famous Levinsky Sunday punch meant nothing to him. Hadn't he heard them "build up" all the other guys he had fought? Well, there had been nothing to that stuff. Too, he knew the crowd was wondering if he could take it. He had told someone sharply, "I don't have to take it, I dish it out."

But he would show them. He'd take all Levinsky had and crush him like an annoying cockroach.

That's just what he did. Only half the story of the fight has been written. It has been all about what Louis did to the Kingfish. That is but natural. But something should be written about what the Kingfish did (or tried to do) to Louis. Louis himself, after the fight, stated that Levinsky had stuck his thumb in his eye, "but I don't think he meant it," added Joe. Don't let anybody try to tell you Levinsky did not want to make a fight of it. Don't you believe that stuff about Levinsky being afraid. The writer knows Levinsky, has talked with him, punched him in the belly. The Kingfish fears no man. He might have been puzzled (his face showed that) but he was not afraid. He intended to turn the power on Joe at the first opportunity. And he did. There were lots of those at the ringside who seem not to have seen the sock which Levinsky landed on Joe's jaw. That is possible. The fight was so quick, so filled with action, that it could have been missed. But this writer was within ten feet of the two fighters when the Levinsky sock landed on Joe's cheek bone. Joe said Levinsky just grazed his eye. Other reporters thought the blow landed on Joe's neck. It didn't. It hit him flush on the cheek bone. It is a tribute to Joe's toughness and durability if he thought Levinsky had just grazed his eye.

Levinsky hit Joe twice with all he had. But he might just as well have socked the chin whiskers of a George Washington statue. Joe was a deadly rampaging machine. He knew he could take it. His first sock to Levinsky's chin a curving combination left hook and uppercut told him that the Kingfish was his dinner. And with a fury shown in none of his other fights, he sped up the killing.

Before the Carnera fight, Levinsky might have lasted six or seven rounds with Joe. But, after the New York brawl, it was "in the cards" that the likable boy of Maxwell street was to go out early.

And "it is in the cards" that all the other heavyweights, black and white, must fall before the dynamite of the Bomber for a long time to come. Louis will fight Baer in September. Baer will be in condition for this fight. And he'll fight. But don't worry my dearies. It will do no good. These six-inch mule kicks of Louis will put him out of condition. Not for a long, long time will the conqueror of Joe Louis come along, maybe never if he takes care of himself.

Somewhere up on the way, maybe two or three years from now, a dark shadow will probably cross the path of Louis, a Sam Langford dogging a Jack Johnson. The shadow will be a jet black boy, also from Detroit, known as Lorenzo Pack. There are those who look forward to this fight. Pack is expected to pack away the entire pack of ex-

isting reayweights and confront Joe. But Paek has come along at the wrong time. Louis is too far in front. When Paek has worked his way in front of the other heavies, Louis will still be in front of him, a boxing Corbett, a slugging Dempsey, and a strategist like Britton, all rolled into one.

NEGRO NEWSPAPERS HAVE SPECIAL WIRES AT BIG FIGHT

Chicago, Aug. 14. (ANP)—Colored members of the fourth Estate did a fine job by Joe Louis and the promoters who put over the fight between him and King Levinsky at Comiskey Park last Wednesday night.

Special wires were leased by The Pittsburgh Courier, The Afro-American and The Atlanta Daily World, which carried blow-by-blow descriptions of the fight until its eventful end after two minutes twenty seconds of fighting.

"Ches" Washington, sports editor of The Courier, sat next to Bill Corum of the Hearst staff and piled up copy for his paper. Directly after the fight, he shot pictures into Pittsburgh by plane. The publication of The Courier was held up 24 hours in order to obtain coverage of the fight. Within an hour and a half after the fight was over, The Courier was on the street.

B'l Gibson of The Afro American also wired his paper while the fight was in progress. The Afro had made special preparations for a blow-by-blow description of the battle to be broadcast from its plant in Baltimore.

P. I. Prattis did the number for the Atlanta World.

Also sitting in the "working press" row was Al Munro of the Defender. Munro began long before the fight to grind out impressionistic copy for the special editions of his paper which were issued before 10 o'clock. Close by was Frank Young, sports editor of the Kansas City Call; Russel Covans, Detroit, and numerous other representatives of the colored press.

After the fight, as the colored boys ground out their copy for the waiting telegraph operators, a large crowd of spectators from the "millionaires' row" behind them stood up and watched the writers at work while reading their stories.

BAER NEXT FOR LOUIS. MAYBE CHICAGO, MAYBE NEW YORK

Chicago, Ill. Aug. 14. (ANP)—The battle of the dynamites, Joe Louis and ex-champion, Max Baer, will be held either Sept. 26 or 27, either in Yankee Stadium, New York, or Soldier Field, Chicago.

The papers were signed last Thursday in this city following the Louis-Levinsky scrap.

Wherever it is fought, there is a tentative arrangement that the fighters will each receive 30 per

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cent of the net receipts.

There is no question about the fight being held. Mike Jacobs, promoter of the Twentieth Century club, New York, which staged the Louis-Carnera imbroglio, holds the signed papers of each man.

The big question to be settled now is the city which will get the fight. New York wants it and Chicago wants it. Managers of both fighters are said to prefer Chicago. Which-over town treats them the better will get the fight.

Ancil Hoffman, Baer's manager, was quoted as saying that he'd rather have his man fight in Chicago and receive less money.

TENNESSEE GOVERNOR SAVES SLAYERS FROM CHAIR

Nashville, Tenn., Aug. 14. (ANP)—Clemency on the part of Governor McAllister, Thursday saved Morice Jones and obert White from the electric chair, to which they had been sentenced to die for the murder of Robert A. Cox, white insurance man of Memphis, Tennessee. The death sentences were commuted to life imprisonment by the governor.

The convictions were recently confirmed by the Supreme Court and only the interference on the part of Governor McAllister saved the doomed men from death. In submitting the recommendation to the governor for executive clemency, the court declared:

"While constrained to sustain the findings of the trial judge that the confessions were not illegally obtained the mind cannot be made to rest easily upon a conclusion to affirm the judgement carrying the death penalty without a recommendation that the governor commit the sentence of both defendants to life imprisonment for life."

Cox, an agent for the National Burial Company of Memphis was killed as he was about to enter the

home of a policy holder, December 24, 1934 by two men, later identified as Jones and White. Following their arrest both confessed to the crime but later repudiated their confessions, declaring that they confessed under duress. The trial was held January 24, 1935 and the men were sentenced to die in the electric chair.

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Raising the Family - Pa didn't stop to think how it would sound! A cartoon strip showing a man talking to his children about raising a family.