

JOHNSON'S PROWESS DOUBTED

Many Say Negro Never Beat a First-Class Man.

RING RECORD OF THE BIG SMOKE

Regarded as Second-Rater Until He Whipped Overrated Tommy Burns

Narrow Escape in Battle with Langford.

"Did Jack Johnson ever beat a first class man?" You can hear this question put many times when fighting men gather and discuss the big mill between the negro and Jeffries to be decided at Emeryville, Cal., on July 4.

So keen a judge of fighting skill as Fitzpatrick, could not err when he decided that Tommy Burns would be most for Johnson, for Burns, it is admitted, never could be called a high class pugilist.

Pugilism prompts excitement, exaggerated fears and rash statements. Many ring followers, guided by impulse or prejudice, often fall to sit down quietly and weigh the evidence in hand.

What Johnson Has Done. So what is the "dope" on Jack Johnson that he should be regarded as a world beater and a sure winner over James J. Jeffries?

knocked him out in less than half a dozen rounds; but that was the only time when Johnson took a nap within the roped arena.

Before proceeding with the record it is worthy of note that just four years prior to these battles Jeffries, who had just begun to attract attention on the coast, disposed of Mexican Pete Everett in three rounds and Hank Griffin in four, neither of them having a ghost of a chance when Jess began to punch in deadly earnest.

One Punch for McVey. Johnson knocked McVey out in the twentieth round in another fight held the next year in San Francisco. Whether it was an accident or not is a matter still open to discussion.

Peter Felix, who was knocked out by Johnson in a round at Sydney, New South Wales, in February, 1907, was of little account. In the following July the ancient Fitzsimmons, who had been punched into submission by Philadelphia Jack O'Brien on the coast two years before, went up against Fitzpatrick's "colored champion" and was knocked out in a couple of rounds.

It was in 1906 that Johnson fought Marvin Hart in San Francisco. Hart was just a good second rater, big and strong, with lots of gameness and a terrific wallop.

Johnson wasn't cutting much of a figure then and when Young Peter Jackson and Joe Jeannette, both negro second raters, fought draws with him before the end of that year, Sam Fitzpatrick found very few ring followers who were willing to listen to the negro's prospects.

that it wasn't much of a stunt for Johnson to beat him. Burns, six inches shorter and at least forty pounds lighter, was knocked down with a right-hand uppercut delivered by Johnson in the second round.

Fight with Langford. Many stories have been told of this Johnson-Langford scrap, but there is only one that is true. Langford stood five feet seven and one-half inches in his fighting shoes and weighed exactly 130 pounds. He was five inches shorter and nearly sixty pounds lighter than Johnson.

Johnson could never be induced to fight Langford again. The latter weighs 170 pounds now and is a trifle taller. He can hit harder and knows much more about the game. He has challenged Johnson repeatedly, offering to bet \$10,000 on the side, but all to no purpose.

Some Minor Achievements. Johnson stopped one Kid Culler, a pupil of John L. Sullivan, in about three wallops, but there was a storm of severe criticism when the big negro allowed Sailor Burke, a middleweight, to stay six rounds with him in what was apparently a bare-faced fraud in the city of Bridgeport.

These alleged battles occurred in 1907 before Johnson wound up that campaign by knocking out Jim Flynn at Colma in eleven rounds. Just a year later Langford put Flynn to sleep in a punch. Then Johnson began the pursuit of Burns, which ended in Australia with the fight that has compelled Jeffries to come back to the prize ring.

One can take a look at Burn's short ring record and be partially convinced

that it wasn't much of a stunt for Johnson to beat him. Burns, six inches shorter and at least forty pounds lighter, was knocked down with a right-hand uppercut delivered by Johnson in the second round.

Burns was nothing more than a middleweight or a very light heavyweight when he began to fight about ten years ago. He couldn't have known much about the game when Mike Schreck beat him in a ten-round bout in 1901. Five years ago Burns fought a twenty-round draw with Jack Twin Sullivan and got a twenty-round decision over Dave Barry. Later he got a verdict over Sullivan in a similar bout and knocked Barry out in the twentieth round of a second encounter.

Philadelphia Jack O'Brien went twenty rounds to a draw with Burns in November, 1906, and in the following May Burns, double crossing and exposing O'Brien's fakes, beat him over the same route. It took Burns fifteen rounds to stop Flynn. Then Tommy decided to meet soft snags exclusively, so Bill Squires, Gunner Moir, Jack Palmer, Jim Roche, Jewey Smith and other pugilistic lemons fell before him.

Not a Real Champion. Johnson, therefore, didn't whip a real champion heavyweight when Burns was beaten. The negro will not attempt to deny it. It is true that he toyed with Al Kaufman, the California giant, in a ten-round bout last September, but O'Brien knocked out Kaufman in 1903. The defeat of Ketchel by the negro should never have been recorded, for the match was a freak and the result of foolish judgment. Ketchel had the courage to tackle Johnson, though five inches shorter and nearly fifty pounds lighter. He also had the nerve to force the fight and in the twelfth round he scored a knockdown when one of his great swings landed on the side of the champion's head.

Going over these battles, therefore, ringsters are not inclined to admit that Johnson's victims were great pugilists. In fact, they are reasonably sure they were not. But there's something about this muscular, cool headed, cold blooded black man that has caused the belief that Jeffries is going to have the fight of his life. Possibly this is due to the fact that it's a question just now whether Jeffries will be the great pugilist of six years ago or not.

JOCKEY IS "BEST HORSE"

Owners Are Counting Much on Their Skillful Riders.

MANY STARS ARE IN THE FIELD

Honors of Track Bid Fair to Be Rather Well Divided in Sport During the Coming Season.

NEW YORK, April 23.—With the racing season now in full swing in the east a few remarks about the jockeys will not be out of place. Time and time again good sport has been ruined and a day's entertainment spoiled by the incompetency of some "supposed to be" jockey.

As in former years, the larger establishments have obtained the best boys; but there are a few of the owners who race upon a small scale whose best "horse" is in their rider, a few cases in point being Guy Garner, George Henscoten and Eddie Taplin. Butwell is piloting the horses of J. R. Keene, and as Timmy Rowe will campaign close to forty horses this season it looks as if his efforts will mostly be confined to those of his employer.

Powers, who is under contract to Phil Chinn, will be available to others in quest of his services as his employer has but ten horses in training at present, eight of which are 2-year-olds. Grover Warren, a boy who has never performed before the eastern public, comes here with a good reputation and is under contract to the Quinny stable.

Eddie Taplin, whose first eastern appearance was with the Dedwell stable last season, is in the employ of R. J. McKenzie, a well known Canadian sportsman, whose horses have been racing in California throughout the past winter.

Guy Garner, considered by horsemen the most likely prospect in the country, is apprenticed to Earl Idnell, but as his employer has but few horses second call has been obtained on his services by the Newcastle stable, and as Tom Welch will handle upward of forty horses belonging to this establishment it goes without saying that the boy's time will be pretty well taken up in handling the horses of his contract employers.

Matty McGee, whose services were obtained from his former employer, Henderson & Hogan, by George Odum, will have opportunity enough to make good, for with Trance, Bonnie Kelso, Prince Gal and Polite Levy in the older division, to say nothing of a dozen nice 2-year-olds, who on looks measure up to the best, he should rate close to the top.

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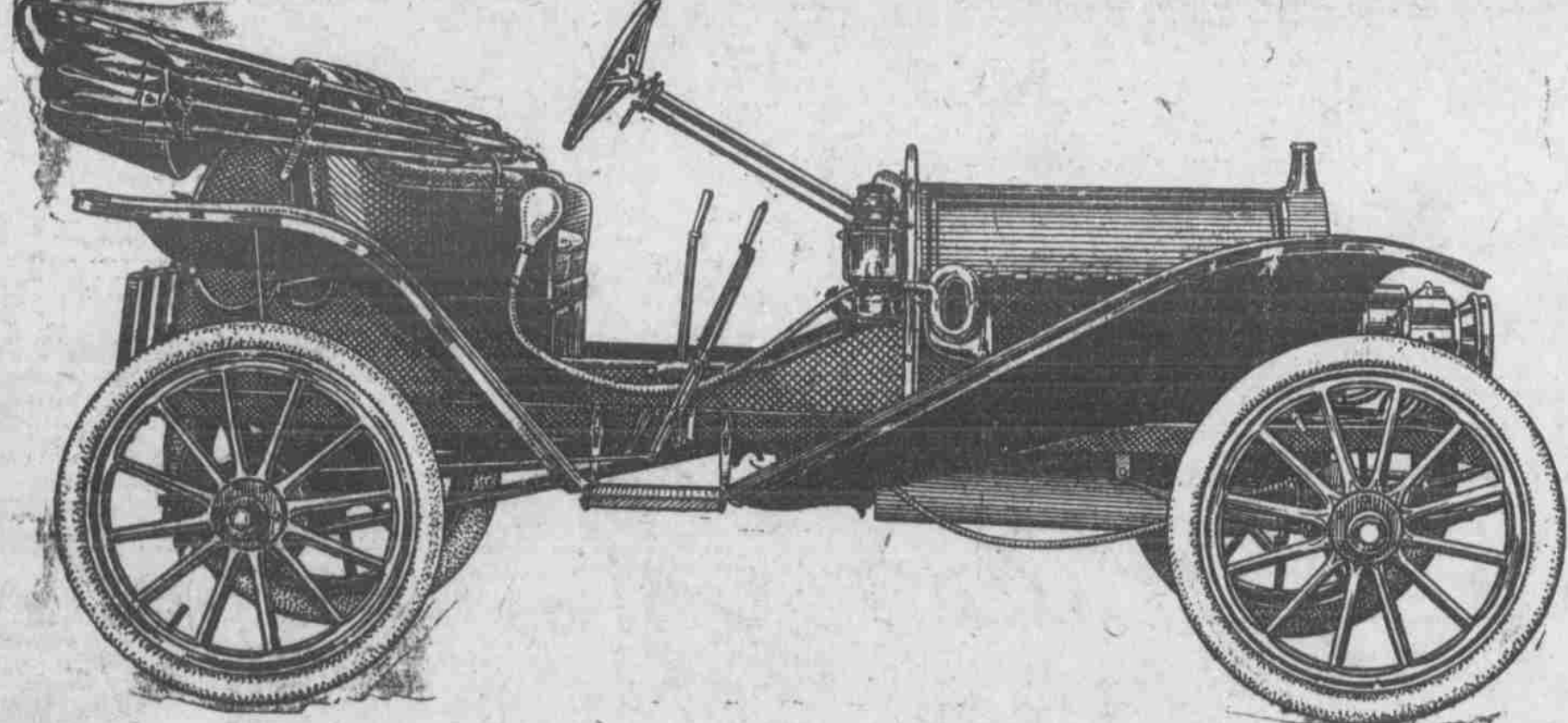
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with equal credit. On the new Los Angeles Motor-drome it recently turned a mile in 58 seconds, carrying full equipment of lamps and fenders. In the fewest words, the year has been one of triumphal progress for the Hupmobiles.

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