



Jimmy Braddock, left, on his way to dethroning Max Baer from the world heavyweight championship at Long Island City in 1935. Braddock won on points.

## Braddock, Who Beat Baer for Title, Dies

NORTH BERGEN, N. J., Nov. 29 (AP)—James J. Braddock, who won the world heavyweight championship in 1935 by outpointing Max Baer in one of boxing's biggest upsets, died today at his home here. He was 68 years old.

Surviving are his widow, the former Mae Fox; two sons, Howard and Jay; a daughter, Rose Marie DeWitt; four brothers, two sisters, and six grandchildren.

### Diffident Demeanor

By JOE NICHOLS

Jimmy Braddock of the soft voice, twisted smile and diffident demeanor looked more like the old-time friendly Irish cop on the beat than a prize fighter. His patient manner marked his everyday pose just as it did his way of going into the ring. To those who knew him well the nickname Plain Jim, handed to him by John Kieran was far more descriptive than the more famous sobriquet of Cinderella Man that Damon Runyon dubbed him.

And yet, there was pertinence in Runyon's name for Braddock. The fighter's professional career was a true sign of the ring, embracing as it did a promising start, a skid to oblivion and retirement, a desperate return to fighting from the relief rolls of the Depression era and, as a fairy tale climax, the winning of the heavyweight boxing championship of the world, the richest individual prize in the realm of sports.

This final achievement was as surprising in its way as the miraculous climb of the 1969 Mets in baseball greatness. For Braddock had to hurdle three heavily favored and highly rated foes at the time to get the shot at the title. And to get the title he had to fight and beat Max Baer, a mighty hitter whose strength and awesome reputation made him the favorite at odds of 10 to 1, and even more.

But on the night of June 13, 1935, in the Madison Square Garden Bowl in Long Island City, Queens, Braddock brought off the boxing miracle of the time. He boxed his way, patiently and craftily, to the unanimous decision over the baffled Baer in 15 rounds.

Again, on June 22, 1937, Braddock was the short-ender in the betting in a fight with Joe Louis, but this time Braddock lost his title by a knockout in eight rounds. Before bowing to Louis, though, Braddock had the satisfaction of knocking him down, in the fourth round. The Cinderella era having closed, Braddock had only one more regular fight after that, a 10-round decision conquest of Tommy Farr on Jan. 21, 1938.

His complete ring career embraced 84 bouts with 52 victories of which 28 were knockouts, 21 defeats including two knockouts, three draws, two no contests and six no decisions. He stood 6 feet 2½ inches tall and, for his title fight with Baer, weighed 190 pounds.

Braddock was born here on Dec. 6, 1905. When he was a child his family moved to West

New York, N.J., just the other side of the Hudson River. He engaged in his first amateur bout at the age of 17, and it was not until he was 20 that he turned professional, as a middleweight (160 pounds).

He built up a good record frequently beating heavier opponents, and in 1929, having reached the light heavyweight class of 175 pounds, he met Tommy Doughran in a bid for the latter's championship of that division, but was outpointed.

### Went Into Decline

He went into a decline after that, and lost frequently until, after breaking a hand in a fight with Abe Feldman on Sept. 25, 1933, he gave up the ring to become a longshoreman. Work was scarce in that line, and Braddock was forced to apply for relief to support his wife and three children. It is a frequently repeated story that, as soon as he became solvent again, Braddock repaid every cent of the \$17 a week relief money to the agencies.

Early in 1934 a fighter named Corn Griffin from Georgia appeared on the heavyweight scene, and a local heavyweight "name" was sought to oppose him in a frank effort to build him up as a championship contender. Braddock was working on the docks, but his friend and manager, Joe Biegel, professionally known as Joe Gould, persuaded Mike Jacobs, the promoter to accept Braddock as a sacrificial lamb for Griffin. On June 14, in a preliminary to the championship fight between Baer and the unsuccessful defender, Primo Carnero, Braddock knocked the favored Griffin out in three rounds.

After that surprise victory, Braddock successively defeated John Henry Lewis and Art Lasky, and earned the match with Baer. That triumph brought financial security to Braddock who, according to the custom of the era, profited through personal appearances and testimonials for two years before risking his title. It was in his first defense, against Joe Louis, in Chicago, that Braddock was dethroned by a knockout in eight rounds.



The New York Times  
James J. Braddock