

The Boxing Biographies

Newsletter

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robert.snell1@ntlworld.com

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Name: Tod Morgan

Career Record: [click](#)

Birth Name: Albert Morgan Pilkington

Nationality: US American

Hometown: Seattle, Washington, USA

Birthplace: Dungeness, Washington, USA

Born: 1902-12-25

Died: 1953-08-03

Age at Death: 50

Stance: Orthodox

Height: 5' 7½"

Reach: 180

Division: Super Featherweight

Trainer: [Spider Roach](#)

Managers: [Fred Morgan](#), [Frank Churchill](#)

Photo: Morgan with his father/manager Fred.

According to the April 7, 1927 *Spokane Spokesman-Review*, **Tod Morgan** was born in Dungeness, WA--which is adjacent to Sequim. ([Dungeness](#) is now a ghost town.)

Per an August 19, 1923 *Seattle Daily Times* newspaper article, Morgan's first bout occurred in Concrete, Washington. His second occurred at Anacortes, Washington, and his opponent was Pete Moe. He then headed south to California with his step-father Fred Morgan, who had been born in Oregon. That article also states Morgan's record, at that August 1923 date, to be 68 total bouts so far, losing three, and having never been knocked out. (On December 17, 1925, the Associated Press reported that Morgan, who was in San Francisco at the time, had settled the "hometown question" by proclaiming Seattle, Washington, as his official hometown--saying that he had lived there longer than anywhere else. Tod once had sold newspapers on the streets of Seattle.)

After they arrived in Eureka, California, Fred put his son in boxing merely as a means of getting some strength into his body. According to the April 3, 1929 *Seattle Daily Times*, Fred began training Tod in the backroom of the Hoffman House in Vallejo, a soft-drink parlor and lunch room (this was during Prohibition). Fred had no intention of his son ever becoming a professional fighter, let alone a world champion. But Tod liked it so much that he began boxing professionally. On April 6, 1927, local newspapers reported that Fred Morgan had been found dead in a motor boat near Port Angeles, Washington. It was believed that a leak in the boat's exhaust pipe resulted in his death while he had slept. Tod took a break from boxing during this period.

On February 15, 1929, in Seattle, Tod Morgan adopted Billie, the four-year-old son of Mrs. Morgan (formerly of Arcata, California).

According to the December 24, 1942 *Portland Oregonian*, Morgan served in the Australian Army, fighting in Africa. He later returned to the United States and worked as a referee and a bellboy in hotels before he became ill in 1953 and died. He was survived by his widow, Grace, and his mother, Ms. Minta Pilkington of Reno, Nevada.

Oakland Tribune

21 April 1925

“Pa” and Tod Morgan To Go Fishing

Kaplan Is Not a Fish, But Vallejo Boy Is Angling For Him.

By, BOB SHAND.

Jim Stevens, the State Athletic Commission's representative for Solano county and Vallejo's keenest fight fan, will head a big delegation of Vallejo citizens to Oakland tomorrow night to see Tod Morgan tangle with Stewart McLean at the Auditorium. The fans of the navy yard town think more of little Tod than they used to think of Sailor Petroskey, Sailor Grande and other noted battlers who got their start at Flosden arena.

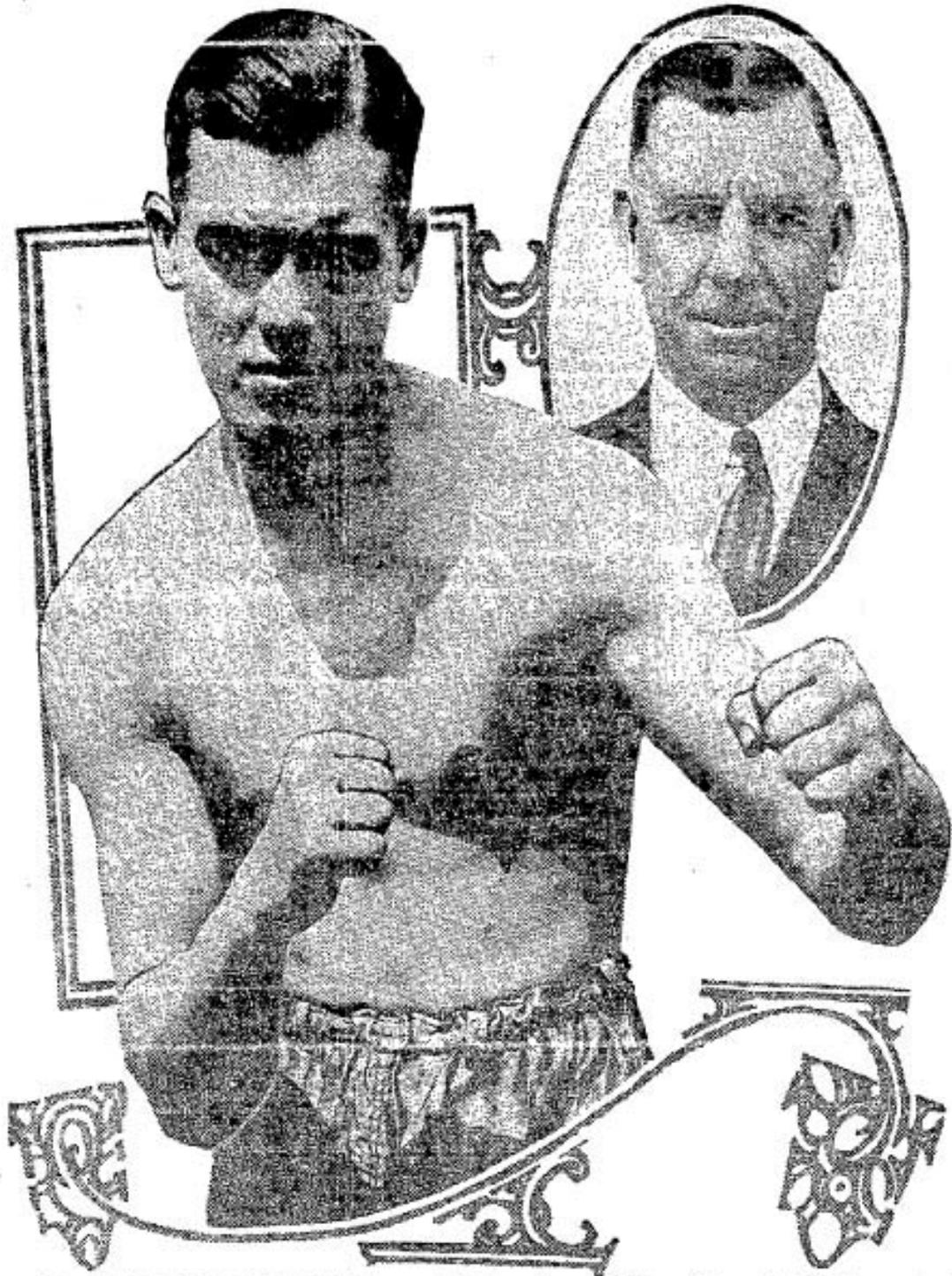
That historic structure was torn down many years ago, but Jack Brereton kept the game going when he started hostilities among the four rounders at the Airdrome. The best boy developed by Brereton was Morgan, and Vallejo claims Tod as her very own.

GOT BIG CHANCE HERE.

After winning a flock of fights from, good boys in the navy yard town, Henry F. Stahl, newspaper proprietor and postmaster, thought the kid was entitled to a bout in the big city and he asked the writer to see how Tommy Simpson felt about It.

"I know you hear of many country 'phenoms,'" wrote Stahl, "and most of them fade away, but this Morgan boy is a real fighter and the Oakland fans will certainly fall for him. See if you can get Simpson to put him on."

"THE PRIDE OF VALLEJO"



Here is TOD MORGAN, Vallejo boy, and the best boxer of his weight on the Pacific coast. He learned to fight at the old Airdome arena in Vallejo when Jack Brereton was promoting fights there, and a big delegation of fans from the navy yard town will be here to see him box Stewart McLean tomorrow night. The inset is FRED MORGAN, the lad's father and manager.

The proposition was put to the local promoter and Tod got a spot on a four-round card. He was an instantaneous hit. That was more than three years ago and the lad has been winning ever since.

Fighting and fishing are Morgan's favorite sports. After a hard campaign in the ring he heads for the mountains and spends several weeks fooling fish with carefully concealed hooks. In this way he builds himself up and comes back to the ring in prime condition.

Tod is managed by his father, Fred Morgan, who is just as keen a fisherman as his son. The pair know every mountain stream in California and Oregon and they never fail to return from their trips with limits of big ones.

WANTS TO MEET KAPLAN.

Morgan's ambition is to meet Kid Kaplan for the featherweight title and if he ever gets a "shot" at the champion Vallejo will go broke if he loses. McLean and Tod met in a four round bout a year ago; Morgan taking the decision. Since that time both have improved a great deal. Over the ten round route the rival managers feel that their boys will do better. Tomorrow night will, tell the tale.

In addition to the main event there will be five four-round bouts on the card this week. Maxie Rosenbloom, a clever middleweight from New York, will tangle with Tiger Payne. The latter licked Vic Morrison in his last start Nobe Cerevantes and Ad Cadena, two newcomers, will make their debut. Other bouts are: Billy Gibbs vs. Kid Williams; Al Crisp vs. Georgie Lee; Georgie Etccl vs. Dave Au.

End

Oakland Tribune 10 June 1925

Morgan Better Than Last Program Here

By| *BOB SHAND.*

Tod Morgan will have more stamina tonight when he meets Joe Gorman in the ten-round main event at the Auditorium than he had the night they gave Stewart McLean a draw with him. Fred Morgan, who handles Tod's financial and fistic affairs, says the lad has picked up a bit of weight since his last appearance here, and that he will be able to stand a hot pace.

According to Morgan snr. Tod was a sick little gent the night he met McLean, having just been released from an hospital. At that, Tod swarmed all over the St. Paul boy In the early rounds, but tired towards the end. Since that time Tod has been in the mountains recuperating, and he is back in championship form again.

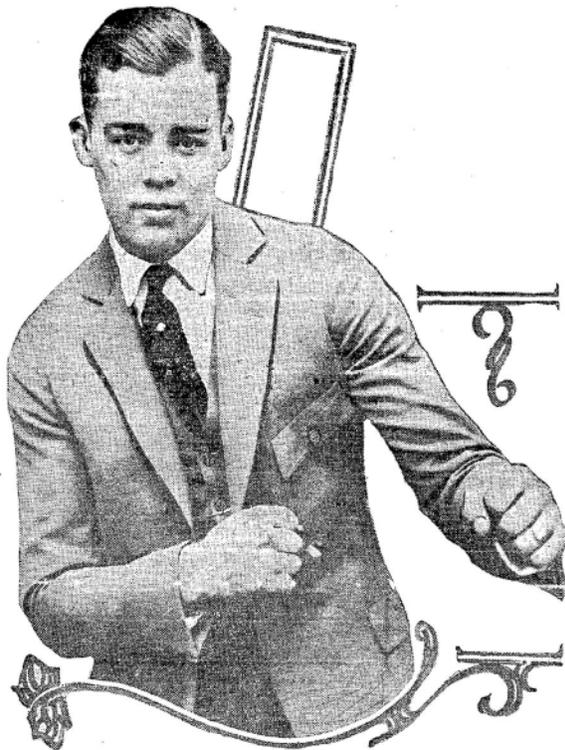
Gorman will surprise tonight if he wins over Morgan and takes the Pacific coast championship, but Joe is quite confident. He has boxed a draw with Tod, and thinks he knows enough about his style to at least hold him even. In his gymnasium work the Oakland boy has showed a considerable amount of stuff, and the chances are he will be in there at the finish. However,

Morgan is much the better boxer, is faster and a better hitter, and he is naturally favored to win. Solano and Napa counties will be represented at the ringside tonight. The Vallejo and Napa fans have combined to charter a special boat to take them across the straits after the scrap, and at least 200 customers from Tod's home town will be there to root for him. Tom Stevens, Jimmy O'Hara, Henry Stahl,- Eddie Longdon, Frank Lee and several others have arranged parties.

End

Oakland Tribune
12 Jan 1926

THE PRIDE OF VALLEJO



TOD MORGAN, one of the classiest boxers ever developed in California, who will box Joe Gorman, ten rounds in the main event of the Auditorium Show tonight.

**Morgan Shows Class Against Gym helpers
Junior Lightweight King
Steps Six Fast Rounds For
Athens Club Members**

Tod Morgan looks and acts like a champion. Frankie Bray and Sammy Cross Trill say so. They, Frankie and Sammy, essayed to spar with the world's Junior lightweight champion before a goodly number of Athens club members in the gym of the Clay street club yesterday and received nothing but socks for their pains and pains for their socks.

Morgan, who meets Stewart McLean in the main event of Tommy Simpson's boxing show in the Oakland Auditorium tomorrow evening, was making his first appearance in an Oakland gym since he won the synthetic lightweight laurels from Mike Ballerino several months ago.

RUINS PUNCHING BAG.

Tod went about his work of displaying his championship wares in a very serious frame of mind. First he knocked the punching off its swivel and on to the of an Athenian who was close enough to see the whites of Tod's eyes but was afraid to shoot, The bag punching had to be abandoned when it was found there was not a piece of rope in the place strong enough to hold the bag under Tod's battering.

After the customary warming up exercises, including rope skipping and shadow boxing, Tod stepped three rounds around Frankie Bray, a welterweight or something. Frankie proved to be a good catcher and Tod demonstrated that he, like his opponent McLean, carries plenty of dust in his right hand. His left has always been recognized as potential punishment.



It is hardly exaggerating the case to say Bray only hit Morgan once in the three rounds That once was a wild overhand swing that caught Morgan on the nose and tickled him almost to the point of sneezing. Morgan parried all of Bray's leads and, on occasion stepped in with his rapier-like left to tattoo the Bray phiz or battered in with his right.

Sammy Cross proved to be a little faster than Bray and he didn't catch so many. However, he didn't land any oftener than his predecessor had.

MORGAN IS CLEVER.

Morgan is going to prove mean entertainment for McLean. It is acknowledged the latter carrier the knockout potion in his right It may now be acknowledged again that Morgan, in addition to a dynamite left has a right hand of no mean proportions. Those two

tools coupled with his ability to protect himself at all limes may prove too much for McLean.

Last Thursday night in Portland Morgan cut Sammy Compagno down to size in eight rounds. Sammy's seconds tossed in the towel after the San Francisco boy had been floored several times during the encounter. Now Compagno never was and never will be a contender for anything, but he likes to fight and is hard to knock out. His record is as long as the route across the estuary since the Webster street bridge was knocked out, and it contains very few knockouts. Compagno is merely cited here as an example of the handiwork Morgan is capable of.

1926 BOXING REVIEW

By Peg Murray



DENIES MARRIAGE RUMOR.

Tod emphatically denied the rumor he has married. He further declared he is not contemplating matrimony. "Why should I get married?" he countered in reply to the question. Not knowing the answer nobody told him. Morgan said he weighed 129 $\frac{3}{4}$ against Compagno last Thursday night and expected to enter the ring tomorrow night weighing about 129 $\frac{1}{2}$. When he toppled Ballerino he weighed 128.

End

The Bee, Danville VA

6 Sept 1934

Mickey Walker and Tony Canzoneri, down in the mouth after their recent disastrous experiences, ought to hop a boat for Australia. Perhaps they will after reading this story of Tod Morgan, a worn warrior who was down, but who came up again in the land down under. Morgan fought his last fight in this country at White Center, a Seattle suburb, a little more than a year ago. His cut was \$14.

Then he went to Vancouver, B. C., to promote, and flopped. Morgan was stone broke for a spell. He lived with Doc Snell, a former feather, in Seattle. He didn't even have carfare down town. The outlook was dismal. Certainly he must be through at 31 and after 14 years of ring toil. Morgan no doubt was thinking of that when he bumped, into Ben Tracy, an Australian boxer



authorized by the Rushcutters Bay stadium, promoters, of Sydney, to recruit talent.

It was last December that Tracy shipped Morgan to the Antipodes, the veteran taking the trip to be assured groceries for the winter.

Morgan the Killer

Morgan drew with Nel Tarleton, the Briton, and ran second to a pair of home guards'. He then won a bout or two, before Joe Ghouly, young St Louis lightweight, once more made him an. appropriate case for retirement. But Morgan obtained another chance. He finished Jimmy Kelso, an Australian who previously had outgalloped him in eight rounds, and belted, out Tommy John of England in the first frame.

"Pretty well all the accepted principles of fighting, and longevity in pugilism, have been calmly battered into smithereens by Morgan," writes W. F. Corbett, Sydney's widely known cauliflowerer critic.

Another scribe called his performance against Kelso "one of the greatest exhibitions of forceful and accurate punching since Eugene Criqui beat the Filipino, Dencio Cabanela.

Morgan reversed his usual form and became the "killer," although, I suppose, the blokes over there aren't any too hard to "Kill"

Maybe It's the Climate

Anyway, from the depths of despair, Old Man Morgan, as they refer to him. again hit the golden trail. While the honor may be dubious, he's called the saviour of the game in Australia. He's glorified in public print. Crowds follow him down the street, kids anxious to touch his clothes, and all that sort of thing. Yes sir. there's Tod Morgan, who made a sizeable fortune defending

the synthetic Junior lightweight crown oftener than anyone ever did, grabbing another stake after all these years.

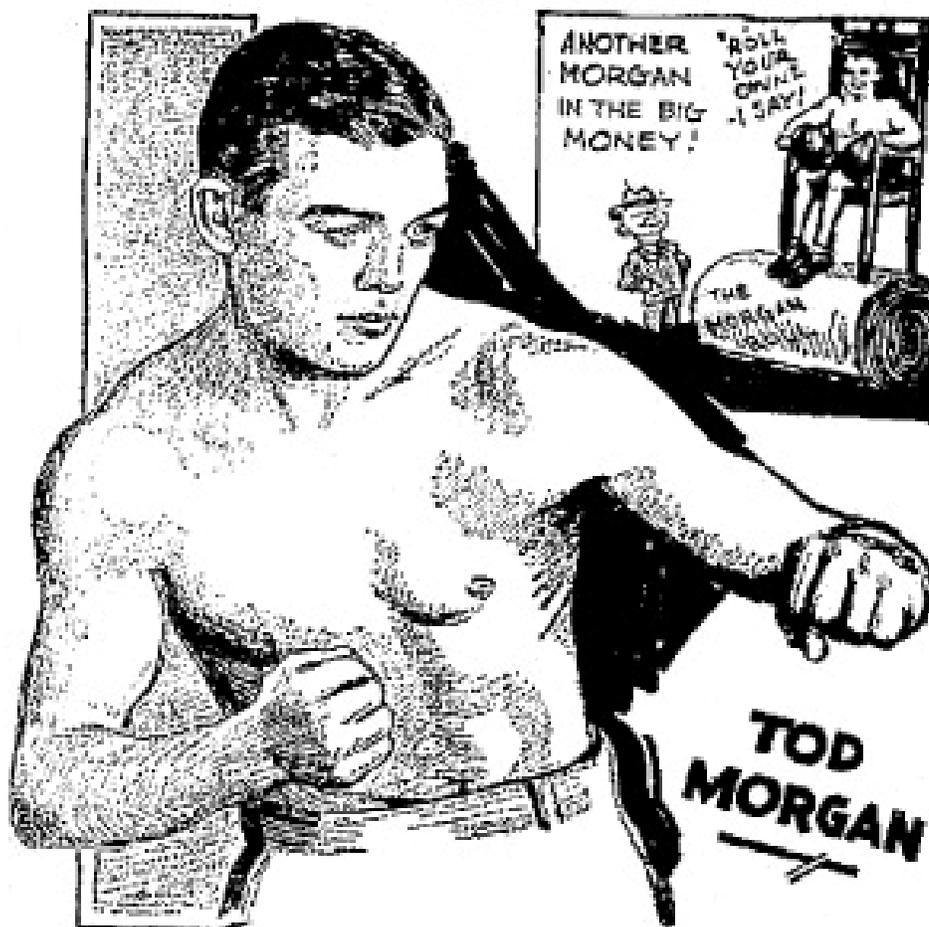
Yes sir there's Morgan, who lost his phoney crown by being knocked kicking by Benny Bass at Madison Square Garden five years ago in a bout that was looked upon obliquely, coming up from has-been alley into the brilliance of another nations athletic limelight.

It might be the climate. You'll recall that Billy Shade became a pretty fair fighter when he invaded Australia, and others have taken new leases on life in that faraway land. And if you find out for certain that the Australian climate returns youth to the aging in any respect, please telegraph me collect.

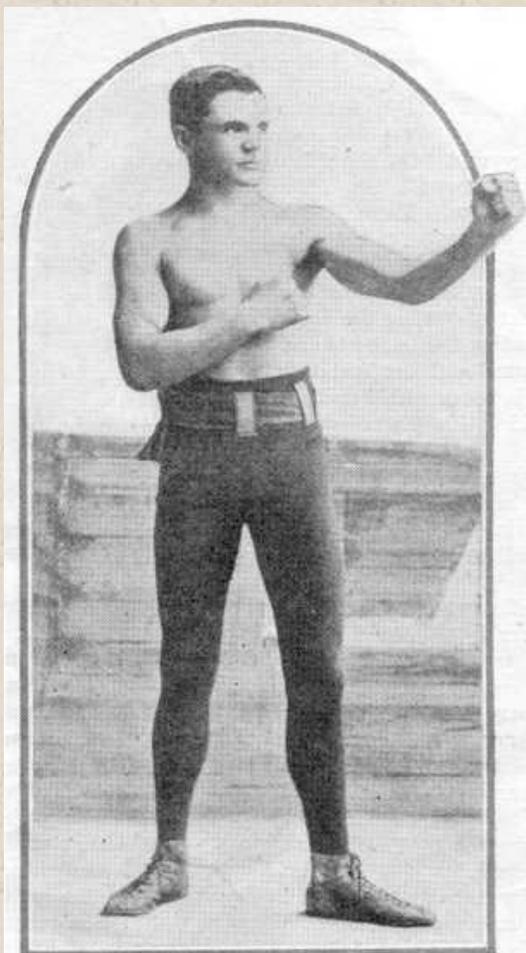
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SYNTHETIC CROWN BRINGS COIN

Tod Morgan Makes \$175,000 as Junior Lightweight Champ.



Wiscerachs about the junior lightweight title don't phase Tod Morgan. He has made a fortune from his much abused position as king of the 130-pounders.



Harry Forbes, Chicago's scientific bantam of the old school

Name: Harry Forbes
Career Record: [click](#)
Nationality: US American
Hometown: Chicago, Illinois, USA
Born: 1879-05-13
Died: 1946-12-19
Age at Death: 67
Height: 5' 3½"
Reach: 165

The Lowell Sun
28 Feb 1903

BANTAM CHAMPION

**Harry Forbes Defeats Andy Tokell
 After 10 Hard Rounds and Wins
 Bantam Championship of the
 World—Tokell is Champion of
 England**

England tried for another, championship last night and scored another defeat. Her champion bantamweight, Andy Tokell was beaten clearly and decisively by Harry Forbes, the champion bantamweight of the world. To say that Forbes was given the decision at the end of the tenth round comes far from telling the measure of his victory.

He won the fight from start to finish, had the better of every round with the possible exception of the seventh. In which he held his own, and proved himself the superior of the English champion in everything that goes to make a champion with the exception of courage, and in this he was equal to Tokell. The latter was something of a disappointment. He showed himself a strong rugged youngster with a world of power behind his blows and proved himself game to the core. He took heavy punishment and came back every time in every round willing and eager to fight again.

In skill he was outclassed by Forbes, who hit him where and how he pleased. Tokell was somewhat cast down by his defeat but took it philosophically. "I was in good shape," he said. and did the best I could. That's all I could do."

During the fight Forbes was seconded by Fred Whittingham, Tom MrCune, Will Campbell and Julius Franks. In Tokell's corner were Con McVey, Jim Kelley, Ray Welsh and Danny McMahan. There was never a fight better conducted than last night's contest. The spectators, 3500 in number, were warned in advance that they must be quiet and make no demonstration during the progress of the rounds. The men fought at 115 pounds, at 2 o'clock, both being exactly

in the limit. George Siler refereed all the contests of the evening. The fight by rounds was as follows:

Round 1

Forbes led left, reaching chest lightly. Tokell put left on shoulder. Forbes put left to face. Forbes missed right swing. Tokell landed hard right on cheek, staggering Forbes. Forbes put left to neck, receiving hard right to jaw. Forbes put left to jaw, receiving right counter on ribs. Forbes put left and right to head, getting two rights in stomach. Forbes put right to face, then rushed, putting three hard lefts to jaw with no return. Forbes put left in to jaw, receiving vicious right in ribs. Tokell showed himself clever and a very stiff, puncher.

Round 2

Forbes put left on neck. Tokell blocked left for face and landed straight left on jaw. Forbes put left to jaw and then clinched. Forbes put stiff left on nose, bringing blood from Tokell's eye with right hook. In a hot scrimmage Forbes put three lefts to jaw and Tokell one to rib; Tokell uppercut Forbes on chin viciously. Tokell missed right swing and right counters in response to straight lefts from Forbes, Tokell swung wildly with left receiving light left in face. Tokell went to his corner bleeding badly from left eye and cheek bone.

Round 3

Tokell led light left, falling short. Forbes' put left to Tokell's cheek and left uppercut on chest Forbes put right to Tokell's bad cheek. Tokell put left to jaw, falling short with right swing and receiving hard right and left in face. Forbes caught Tokell straight left on bad cheek and ducked away from uppercut. Forbes put left to jaw, getting hard right on ribs. Tokell put left and right to ribs. Forbes caught Tokell with hard right swing on jaw Tokell staggered Forbes with a right swing on head. Tokell bleeding badly. His left eye closing as he reached his corner.

Further Rounds on Web site

1911 publication

The history of the prize ring, past and present, is full of stories related concerning former champions of the squared circle who tried to "come back" and failed dismally. As a general rule the man who once retires from active service makes an awful mess of it if he undertakes to begin over again. Jim Jeffries was a case in point, so was Battling Nelson, Jim Corbett, Kid McCoy, Tom Sharkey, Bob Fitzsimmons — the list could be strung out to an indefinite length.

Once in a great while a fighter bobs into view who manages to achieve the seemingly impossible by returning to the scenes of former triumphs and making good. He may be called the "exception who proves the rule," and such a one is Harry Forbes, ex champion of the bantam weight division.

Forbes began boxing in 1897, and from the beginning showed the unusual speed and punching power that helped to make him a world's champion in the future. He won the title in 1903 by defeating Andy Tokell, the British champion; having previously knocked out Danny Dougherty,

who had succeeded Terry McGovern, as American champion. Forbes retired from the ring in 1905.

Up to that time he had participated in 111 battles, and was one of the most popular boxers that ever donned the gloves. Just a year ago the fighting fever seized the retired champion again, and he resolved to tempt fortune between the ropes again. Under the management of Howard Carr, more popularly known as Kid Howard, he went east, and despite his four year absence from the ring, the matchmakers thought well enough of his chances to pit him against Knockout Brown, who was then fighting in the featherweight ranks.

Brown, however, refused to make 118 rounds the weight agreed upon, and the match was called off. The fight was to have taken place at Troy, N. Y., and Jack Ray was substituted for Brown. Ray was knocked out in the second round, Forbes showing clearly that his old time punch had not deserted him.

His next match was with Joe Coster of New York, before a Brooklyn club. Coster was considered the best man of the bantamweight division in the east, and early in the battle he caught Forbes with a short hook on the jaw that floored the Chicagoan. Forbes was knocked groggy by the fall, and for six rounds he fought mechanically, being sent to the floor repeatedly and frightfully punished. Had not his physical condition been absolutely perfect, he could never had stood up under the terrible grueling to which he was subjected. But he stuck it out, and by degrees his head cleared, and he began fighting back.

In the seventh round Forbes landed a right on Coster's jaw that floored the New York lad in his turn. Coster was in bad shape and clinching to save himself. Early in the eighth round Forbes went after his man in tiger fashion, rushed him to the ropes, slammed right and left to his jaw, and dropped him for the full count.

It was this victory which convinced Forbe's friends that he was as good as ever. In a bout at Troy he lost a decision to Abe Attell, the featherweight champion, but this did not detract from his reputation, as Forbes was plainly overmatched in weight, and fighting out of his class.

Forbes last appearance in the ring resulted in a knockout of Mike Bartley in four rounds at Fort Wayne, the contest taking place a short time ago. Boxing critics throughout the country are all of the opinion that Forbes was never better than at the present time. Freddy Whittingham, Forbes' trainer and sparring partner, shares this belief.

Whittingham probably knows Forbes better than any other person living, he having worked with the former king of the bantams from the very start of his career. And Fred says that today Forbes is boxing with all the vim and fire that distinguished him in the past, and his hitting power is as dangerous as ever. To Whittingham belongs the credit for getting Forbes into his fighting trim, and if the former owner of the bantam title should regain it he will have much to thank his faithful trainer.

End