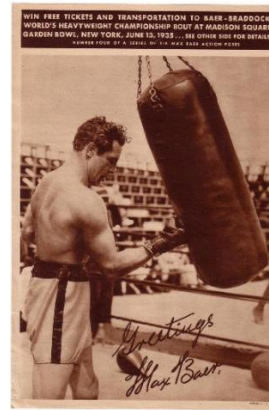


0. BRADDOCK BECOMES CINDERELLA MAN - Story
Preface

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A great deal of publicity preceded the Max Baer v Jimmy Braddock fight. This is an example of sports cards promoting the event. PD

The big fight took place on June 13, 1935 at the Madison Garden Bowl. Baer was so sure he'd win, he barely trained for the match. Why worry about a guy who'd lost a third of his career fights?

As the fight began, Baer hardly tried. When he did, he easily pushed Braddock around. But Jimmy was ready for the fight of his life. He took the punishment, like he always did, and kept coming at the champion.

Undaunted by Baer's taunts, Braddock - unlike Max - didn't think the match-up was a joke. Using his will power to keep scoring points, Braddock hung on. There came a time, well into the match, that Baer's team was concerned. They urged Max to stop giving away rounds. Max assured them - he could drop Braddock whenever he wanted.

Soon thereafter, Max could no longer do what he wanted.

Braddock was a good technical fighter and was winning important rounds. When Baer finally got serious, landing hard punches, Braddock didn't go down. Baer must have thought: "How could I lose to a loser?"

Baer did not calculate how far desperation can drive a human being. He hadn't walked in Braddock's shoes, looking for work and taking welfare money. Max - his "million-dollar body" notwithstanding - was about to become the loser. (Later, he would become the father of [Max Baer, Jr.](#), better known to the world as "Jethro" on "The Beverly Hillbillies.")

At the end of [the fifteenth round](#) - the video depicts the actual bout - the judges unanimously agreed: James J. Braddock was the new heavyweight champion of the world. It was, by all accounts, the biggest upset in boxing history.

In the days before television, the sports writers (Frank Graham, Grantland Rice, John Kieran, Lud Shabazian, and [Damon Runyon](#)) helped to spread Braddock's fame. Everyone called Jimmy the "Cinderella Man."

But not everyone believed the fairy tale, including Jimmy.

As heavyweight champion of the world, he would have to defend his title against the next big challenger. [Max Schmelling](#) wanted a shot at Braddock, but Jimmy remembered how Schmelling had snubbed him before he wore the crown. If he lost the next big match, he wanted the heavyweight crown to stay in America.

Braddock decided to fight [Joe Louis](#) (pictured here with Max Baer). The odds, despite his champion status, were "five to one" against Braddock.

Jack Blackburn, it is said, warned his fighter, [Joe Louis](#), about his new opponent:

This is one cat you ain't gonna scare, Chappie. Jim Braddock ain't gonna quit, either. You're gonna have to knock him out.

It was fitting that the one knock-out of Jimmy's entire career came in the fight where he lost his title. It happened on June 22, 1937.

Braddock still fought masterfully and appeared, at least early in the match, to have enough stamina to win. But Braddock was 32; Louis was 23. Even though Jimmy dropped Joe with a right-hand stroke, by the end of the seventh round it was almost the midnight hour for the Cinderella Man.

Gould wanted to stop the fight. Jim refused.

I want to go out like a champion. I want to be carried out.

He got his wish in the next round. In eighty-four prior fights, Jim Braddock had never been knocked out. He went [out in a flourish](#) (this video includes the actual knock-out) and never fought again, except for one [match](#)

with Tommy Farr.

Once again, the odds-makers were against Braddock. Once again he proved them wrong, winning the Farr fight, by decision, after ten rounds.

Jim Braddock lived until he was 69 years old. People still say he wasn't a great fighter. Maybe that was true of his life in the boxing ring. Maybe not.

But ... greatness doesn't just come from how we succeed in our work, even if we're at the top of the game. It comes from how we live our life, how we love our families, how we treat others. And ... rated on that scorecard, Jim Braddock was a truly great champion.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/BRADDOCK-BECOMES-CINDERELLA-MAN-Cinderella-Man>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/BRADDOCK-BECOMES-CINDERELLA-MAN-Cinderella-Man>

Media Stream



Max Baer, Jr.

Image of Max Baer, Jr., as he appeared during his "Beverly Hillbilly" days, online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Max-Baer-Jr.>



Damon Runyon on the Job

Image of Damon Runyon, online courtesy [Kansas Historical Society](#).

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Joe Lewis and Max Baer

Image of Louis and Baer, online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Jim Braddock and Tommy Farr

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Boxing Match: Jim Braddock v. Max Baer

Historical footage, online courtesy YouTube.

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Boxing Match: Jim Braddock v. Joe Louis

Historical footage, online courtesy YouTube.

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Boxing Match: Jim Braddock v Tommy Farr

Historic footage, of the Braddock-Farr fight, online courtesy YouTube.

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