

Michael Gerard Biography

Mike Tyson (born June 30, 1966) is a retired American boxer. Tyson was the undisputed heavyweight champion and holds the record as the youngest boxer to win the WBC, WBA and IBF world heavyweight titles. He won the WBC title when he was 20 years, 4 months and 22 days old, after defeating Trevor Berbick by a TKO in the second round. Throughout his career, Tyson became well-known for his ferocious and intimidating boxing style as well as his controversial behavior both inside and outside the ring. He was the first heavyweight boxer to hold the WBA, WBC and IBF titles simultaneously. Tyson is considered to have been one of the better heavyweight boxers of all time. He is also the only Heavyweight boxer to individually unify the WBC, WBA and IBF titles.

Nicknamed "Iron Mike" and "The Baddest Man on the Planet", Tyson won his first 19 professional bouts by knockout, with twelve of them occurring in the first round. He unified the belts in the splintered heavyweight division in the late 1980s to become undisputed heavyweight champion of the world. Tyson became the lineal champion when he knocked out Michael Spinks in the first 91 seconds of the fight. Tyson lost his titles to 42-to-1 underdog James "Buster" Douglas on February 11, 1990, in Tokyo, Japan, by a knockout in round 10.

In 1992, Tyson was convicted of raping Desiree Washington, for which he was sentenced to six years in prison but was released after serving three years. After being released from prison in 1995, he engaged in a series of comeback fights. He regained a portion of the heavyweight title, before losing it to Evander Holyfield in a 1996 fight by an 11th round TKO. Their 1997 rematch ended when Tyson was disqualified for biting off part of Holyfield's ear. He fought for a championship again at 35, losing by knockout to Lennox Lewis in 2002. Tyson retired from professional boxing in 2006 after he was knocked out in consecutive matches against Danny Williams and Kevin McBride. Tyson declared bankruptcy in 2003, despite receiving over US\$30 million for several of his fights and \$300 million during his career.

He is ranked #16 on Ring Magazine's list of 100 greatest punchers of all time

HIS EARLY YEARS

Tyson was born in Brooklyn, New York. He has a brother, Rodney, who is five years older than he. His sister, Denise, died of a heart attack at age 25 in 1991. Tyson's father, Jimmy Kirkpatrick, abandoned his family when Tyson was 2, leaving his mother, Lorna Smith Tyson, to care for them on her own. The family lived in Bedford-Stuyvesant until their financial burdens necessitated a move to Brownsville when Tyson was 10 years old. Tyson's mother died six years later, leaving 16-year-old Tyson in the care of boxing manager and trainer Cus D'Amato, who would become his legal guardian. Tyson has been quoted saying, "I never saw my mother happy with me and proud of me for doing something: She only knew me as being a wild kid running the streets, coming home with new clothes that she knew I didn't pay for. I never got a chance to talk to her or know about her. Professionally, it has no effect, but it's crushing

emotionally and personally." Throughout his childhood, Tyson lived in and around high-crime neighborhoods. According to an interview in *Details* his first fight was with a bigger youth who had pulled the head off one of Tyson's pigeons. He was repeatedly caught committing petty crimes and fighting those who ridiculed his high-pitched voice and lisp. By the age of 13, he had been arrested 38 times. He ended up at the Tryon School for Boys in Johnstown, New York. It was at the school that Tyson's emerging boxing ability was discovered by Bobby Stewart, a juvenile detention center counselor and former boxer. Stewart considered Tyson to be an outstanding fighter and trained him for a few months before introducing him to Cus D'Amato.

Tyson was later removed from the reform school by Cus D'Amato. Kevin Rooney also trained Tyson, and he was occasionally assisted by Teddy Atlas, although he was dismissed by D'Amato when Tyson was 15. Rooney eventually took over all training duties for the young fighter. Tyson's brother is a physician assistant in the trauma center of the Los Angeles County-University of Southern California Medical Center. He has always been very supportive of his brother's career and was often seen at Tyson's boxing matches in Las Vegas, Nevada. When asked about their relationship, Mike has been quoted saying, "My brother and I see each other occasionally and we love each other," and "My brother was always something and I was nothing."

HIS COMEBACK

Tyson did not fight again until later in 1995 after he was paroled from prison. He had two comeback bouts against Peter McNeeley and Buster Mathis Jr., which he won easily. Interest in Tyson's first comeback fight since his incarceration was high enough that it grossed more than \$96 million worldwide, including a United States record \$63 million for PPV television. The fight was purchased by 1.52 million homes, setting both PPV viewership and revenue records for that time. The brief, 89-second fight wherein McNeeley swiftly crumpled on facing Tyson, elicited criticism that Tyson's management lined up "Tomato Cans", easily defeatable and unworthy boxers for his return. TV Guide included the Tyson-McNeeley fight in their list of the 50 Greats TV Sports Moment of All Time in 1998.

He regained one belt by easily winning the WBC title from Frank Bruno (second fight) in March 1996 by knocking him out in the third round. Tyson added the WBA belt by defeating champion Bruce Seldon in one round in September that year. Seldon was severely criticized and mocked in the popular press for seemingly collapsing to innocuous punches from Tyson in the fight. Published in 2007, author Joe Layden's book *The Last Great Fight: The Extraordinary Tale of Two Men and How One Fight Changed Their Lives Forever*, chronicled the lives of Tyson and Douglas before and after their heavyweight championship fight. The book received positive reviews and claimed the fight was essentially the beginning of the end of boxing's popularity in mainstream sports.

In 2008, the documentary *Tyson* premiered at the annual Cannes Film Festival in France. The film was directed by James Toback and has interviews with Tyson and clips of his fights and from his personal life. It received high critical praise, scoring an 86% approval rating on the

website Rotten Tomatoes from a pool of over 100 film critics



