

The Sportier

Special Edition

Champion Boxer Muhammad Ali Dies at 74

Former world heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali (born Cassius Clay Jr.) has died at 74 years old from septic shock. Muhammad Ali had a great career, and now it is time to show the life of the champion boxer.

One day, when Muhammad was 12 years old, Muhammad and a friend rode their bikes to the Colombia Auditorium in Louisville, Kentucky. When the boys came out of the building, Muhammad's new, red and white bike had been stolen. Ali went to a police man and told him he would "whup" whoever had stolen his bike. Police man Joe Martin told Muhammad that he better learn how to fight before he goes to do it. So Martin gave Ali lessons on boxing. In Ali's amateur career, from 1954-1960, he won 6 Kentucky Gold Glove titles, an Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) title, and a Light Heavyweight gold medal in the 1960 olympics. When Ali won his first olympic gold medal, he was only 18 years old. Now, without the help of his first coach Joe Martin, Ali was going pro.

Ali made his debut as a pro on October 29, 1960, winning a 6 round match over Tunney Hunsaker. From that day to 1963, Ali went 19-0 with 15 wins by knockout. In 1963, Ali had become the top contender for snatching the Heavyweight title from Sonny Liston. The fight was set for February 25, 1964, in Miami. Liston had an intimidating personality, who was also a dominating fighter. Ali was an underdog 7-1. Despite this, Clay taunted Liston during the pre-fight buildup, calling him "the big ugly bear". "Liston even smells like a bear", Clay said. "After I beat him I'm going to donate him to the zoo." Liston was mad at Ali and wanted to destroy him in a quick knockout. But Ali dodged punch after punch, which eventually gave him the win. After the match, Ali shouted to the press, "I am the greatest!" At 22 years old, Muhammad Ali was the youngest boxer to win the Heavyweight title. That record was later broken by Floyd Patterson at 21 years old, which was broken by Mike Tyson at 20 years old. Ali faced Liston later on, winning in a 2 minute knockout. In the last fight between Ali and Joe Frazier, who won the 1964 gold in the olympics, Ali won, which meant that Ali had beaten Frazer more times than Frazier had beaten him. The match was called the Thrilla in Manilla, and it lasted 14 rounds. Frazier said that he couldn't see near the end, and Ali said, "It was the closest to dying that I have ever been." Ali was a great fighter, but also had some controversial actions.

In Ali's early days, he believed in the ways of the Nation of Islam. Their belief was that christianity was a religion for slave owners. The Nation of Islam was widely viewed by whites and even some African Americans as a black separatist "hate religion" with a propensity toward violence.

In 1967, Muhammad Ali refused to join the army. His boxing license was suspended by the state of New York. He was convicted of draft evasion on June 20 and sentenced to five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. He paid a bond and remained free while the verdict was being appealed. Ali was later released by court.

Muhammad Ali was the greatest fighter of all time. Nobody was better. Ali lived up to what he said, that he could, "Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee."



Sources: [Wikipedia](#), [Sports Illustrated](#)