

# Muhammed ali analysis



Muhammed Ali Muhammad Ali was one of the greatest heavy weight champions. His natural abilities were complemented by his flashy flamboyant personality. It was his ability that won him the heavy weight championship on three separate occasions, but only his Float like a butterfly sting like a bee antics won him the title of the peoples champ (Ali 2).

Born Cassius Clay Jr. on January 17, 1942 in Louisville Kentucky, he was far from over privileged. His father Cassius Clay Sr., worked to support the family as a sign and mural painter. His mother Odessa Clay, worked part time as a domestic. He attended school at Duvalle middle school with his brother Rudolph Clay. After this, he went on to high school at Central High in Louisville Kentucky. Though devoted fully to nearly every aspect of life, he was a rather poor student. He blames this mostly to his preoccupation with boxing. His studies in school reflected the fact that he started training to be a boxer at a young age.

When Ali was a mere twelve years old, his bicycle was stolen from his home in his criminally active neighborhood in Louisville Kentucky. He reported the theft to a nearby police department, which appointed Joe Martin to handle his case. Joe Elsbey Martin supervised the training of young boxers, and invited Ali to join the gym. He arranged for Ali to train with Fred Stoner who taught Ali the basics of moving with speed and grace. He motivated Ali to be like a dancer in the ring. Even at his young age, he was able to develop the skills needed to become a powerful yet skilled boxer. Ali had a lot of success even in high school as an amateur. He claimed a victory in 100 out of 108 matches. The hardware he collected was unheard of for someone his age. He claimed six Kentucky and two National Golden Gloves championships.

In addition, on his way to greatness, he won two Amateur Union championships. His accomplishments were numerous throughout his young career but the most impressive was probably the Gold Medal he won at the Olympic Games in 1960. He competed in the light heavy weight division, in which he would later admit, is where he mastered his renowned skills of ring chatter. He would use degrading remarks to distract and frustrate his opponents. This would prove to be a great strategy. After his victory in the Olympics, he returned to Kentucky where he signed a lucrative contract (Ali 3).

Although only being ranked ninth, he began to attract media attention early with his confident boasting about his ability to win the world heavy weight title. Not only was he a young master of the sport, he also made the media swarm to him with his arrogant yet catchy rhymes. In 1964, he commented to Sports Illustrated that Cassius Clay is a boxer who can throw the jive better than anybody. It was in this same year that he would lay his first claim on the title.

The bout was set in February of 1964 against defending champion Sonny Liston. The match was in Miami, Florida and attracted a lot of hype largely due to Ali's boastful rhymes and insults toward Liston. This launched boxing back into the spotlight of American sporting events. It was the weeks prior to this match that Ali unveiled his rhyming chant, Float like a butterfly sting like a bee which he displayed in the classic bout. During the fearsome battle with Liston, he exhibited grace and power all wrapped into one magnificent spectacle. He used his sly feet to escape the reach of Liston, while slipping in some of his destructive jabs in the process. When the bell for <https://assignbuster.com/muhammed-ali-analysis/>

the eighth roundrang, Liston stayed on his stool in his respected corner. It was then that Ali captured thetitle at the young age of 22. This was a rocket start for his amazing career as the prettyprince of boxing. In June of 1965, he was scheduled for a rematch against Liston. He decided touse a different tactic in this match. Instead of the move and counter move strategy thatserved him well in the first match, he unleashed a fierce first round knockout blow. Theblow was so stunning that it lifted Listons left foot clear off the mat. This displayed tothe entire world that he was a rare caliber of fighter (Bacho 71). Cleveland Williams was next on Alis chopping block. Though it was a sanctionedmatch for the title, Ali treated it like an exhibition. It was this very fight that heunleashed the outrageous Ali Shuffle. The rapid movement of his feet back and forthwhile staying in place stunned the crowd and Williams. This was also when he let loosehis nonchalant defense of lowering his hands and just swaying to dodge the punches. This was probably more taunting than his claims of greatness.

Alis next big test would come on February 6, 1967 against Ernie Terrell, whoheld the boxing association championship. This would prove to be a great match for Ali, as he was fueled by Terrells lack of respect in the prior press conference. The fightended with an Ali victory by decision. This was a big accomplishment due to the factthat it unified boxings greatest titles, and made Ali the undisputed Heavy WeightChampion of the world.

Although everything in the ring was going well, it would be the outside life thatproved most interesting. After meeting Malcolm X in Miami, he was inspired to join thenation of the black Muslims. Eventually the nation awarded formally Cassius Clay, theMuslim name Muhammad Ali which

means beloved by Allah. The press fed on this and was astonished at his politics. He began to focus a lot of his attention on his religion. He protested racism at extreme cost. He got so disgusted after being refused service at a soda fountain, that he tossed his Olympic gold medal into the river. He later reported to the Philadelphia Inquirer, That gold medal didn't mean a thing to me if my black brothers and sisters were treated wrong in a country I was supposed to represent (Ali 2).

Despite his boxing talent, many fans hated Ali when it became public knowledge that he joined the Muslim nation. Making matters worse was Ali's insulting objections to America's involvement in the war with Vietnam. He stated to the press, I ain't got no quarrel with them Vietcong, no Vietcong ever called me nigger. His non-patriotic statements did not go over well with the media. Fans from all across America began to despise all of his efforts both in and out of the ring. After all of these happenings, he still studied and followed the religious efforts of Malcolm X.

In May of 1967, there came somewhat of a judgement day for the Champ. The selective service had called for his draft number and he was going to be shipped to Vietnam. When they called his name to get in line, he simply refused. He was convicted of disobeying the Selective Service act, was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment, and was later released on appeal. On top of this, the National Boxing Association stripped him of his license and his Heavy Weight title. Sports Illustrated's Edwin Shrage quoted the words of Ali writing, I'm giving up my title, my wealth, maybe my future. Many great men have been tested for their religious beliefs. If I pass the test, I'll come out stronger than ever. The court proceedings were long and drawn out. Ali

exhausted a majority of his finances leaving him with a family including his wife and a child to take care of. The Muslim nation began to withdraw their interest in Ali and his legal affairs. These were rough times for the self-proclaimed Greatest. His wife's family helped with his living expenses, while he managed to keep his lawyers paid with what was left of his boxing career. In 1970, Ali's conviction was overturned only after taking the case all the way to the Supreme Court. Not long after this, Ali began efforts to rejuvenate his career. The first match came against Jerry Quarry. A victory came early in the third round for Ali, after a devastating blow that left his opponent unconscious. A few months later came a less significant match against Oscar Bonavena. This was like an exhibition in which Ali knocked out his opponent in merely the second round. Having loosened the kinks in his game, Ali was ready to go for his title (Bach 84). The battle came against Ali, and who he called Paper Champ Joe Frazier. Set for New York City in March of 1971, this match would become the first installment of a classic war. Though both were in magnificent shape, the odds makers gave the edge to Frazier. This would prove to be a good choice, since Frazier won the match by a close decision. Frazier retained the title for the time being.

Ali was granted a rematch that did not come until Frazier had been dethroned by new comer George Foreman. Though it was for nothing more than bragging rights, this would still prove to be a fierce showdown. The two towering athletes exchanged blows for the entire match. Ali would prove to be the better man by both absorbing the ferocious blows of Frazier and bruising him back with his powerful left jab. The win would go to Ali, along with a title shot against George Foreman. Wanting to make a statement, Ali

arranged for the match to be held in KinshasaZaire. The match was billed as The Rumble in the Jungle (Ali 3). Ali was spirituallyenergized while in the foreign country. As he would run through the village for training, the local towns people would touch and follow him. He felt as if he were a leader to hisfellow African people. They were in Nigeria for three months prior to the match in orderto further indorse the fight. The ring was contained by an outdoor arena in beautifulKinshasa Nigeria. The stage was set for a showdown of epic proportions. George Foreman was the favorite because of his young age and powerfulphysique. Ali was an older yet more experienced version of the once champion. The twowould have contradicting styles of fighting, but that would make this fight, one thatwould not be forgotten. Unlike all of his other matches, he employed a different methodof fighting. For the first 5-6 rounds of the match, he stayed on the ropes, allowingForeman to chop away at him. He used the give of the ropes to help absorb the blows. This tired out the bigger sluggish Foreman, which is what Ali had intended. By theseventh round, Ali was ready to unleash his arsenal. He began to come off the ropes withhis dangerous left jab. By the eighth, Foreman was too tired to fight back. Ali danced his way to a number of powerful combinations that landed Foreman on his back, late in the round. The victory regained the Heavy Weight championship, and made him only thesecond man to hold the title twice. He had once again claimed the ladder of the boxingworld.

In September of 1974, Ali would face off against Joe Frazier for a third and finaltime. This match was titled the Thrilla in Manilla. The unrelenting Frazier gave Ali arun for his money. Though Fraziers efforts were great, Ali retained

his title after Frazier was unable to answer the bell for the final round. Though this was an awesome fight, it would have dismal followings (Bacho 86).

Ali's next bout was against Leon Spinks in 1975. Though Spinks was a talented boxer, he was not the caliber in which Ali used to be. He beat Ali by a decision and claimed the heavyweight championship for himself. In 1978, Ali challenged him to a rematch for the title. Ali regained his title and his dignity. This was the third and final time that he retained the Heavy Weight Championship. He was the first person to accomplish this feat. At age 37, he retired from boxing as champion with a professional record of 59 and 3. He scored 50 of those victories by way of knockout.

The retired life was lavish, yet expensive. Ali found himself in need of money so he came out of retirement in 1980. The fight was against Larry Holmes for the World Boxing Council title and a guaranteed pay off of eight million dollars. The match was not like the Ali of old. Ali lost this one by technical knockout in the eleventh round. He fought his last professional match one month before he turned 40. The final fight of his career ended in a loss to Trevor Berbick by knock out. It was a mere two years after this that Ali was hit with something far worse than any punch. He was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 1982. The doctors speculated that it was from the years of repetitive blows to the head. Neither the disease nor his retirement would stop Ali from being politically active. In February of 1985 he helped negotiate for the release of four kidnapped Americans, who were being held in Lebanon. He later met with the leaders of the Soviet Union and Africa and founded the World Organization for Right, Liberty, and Dignity (WORLD).



In 1996, he was given the esteemed honor of lighting the torch at the Olympic Games in Atlanta (Ali 1). Then in 1999 he became the first boxer to appear on cover of a Wheaties box. These awards came years after his boxing career. He now lives in Berrien Springs, Michigan, where he is married to his fourth wife. Spread between these women are nine of his children. His oldest daughter Khaliah Ali is currently pursuing a career in boxing.

Muhammad led an illustrious career as a boxer. Through the ups and downs and all of the adversity, he managed to keep his optimistic outlook and his diligent work ethic. He overcame his legal matters, and survived through the persecution of his religion, he still managed to accomplish more than any boxer, and a majority of any athletes. Though it was just self-proclaimed confidence, he turned out to be just what he told the world, The

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