

## Dempsey vs Willard

Contributed by SamJones  
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Reeling Jess Willard lay on the ropes and took punch after punch, the knock down came once again by a vicious right hand to the back of Willard's head. Unable to stand with out the ropes Big Jess was defenceless as again and again he was hit before hitting the floor again. Nothing like this has ever been seen before or since in a boxing ring, never had one man been beaten so severely and with such little mercy. Reports vary to the damage Willard took, but it is generally considered he suffered a severely broken jaw, a cheek broken in as many as 13 places, 6th teeth removed and a couple of broken ribs, the fight should have been over, but it would continue for two more rounds. This is where the fight gets really interesting.

Let's not forget the fight was 10 seconds short, now technically Dempsey should have won via a first round knock out, Kearns should have won \$100,000 on his bet and Willard should have been spared any further punishment but instead the fight would continue. Technically Jack Dempsey was out of the ring when the second round was due to start, everyone fought he was champion but he wasn't Willard was 'saved' by the bell and the when second round was due to begin Dempsey was no where to be seen, if the rules were followed Jack Dempsey would have lost the fight for failing but as one sports writer would say it wasn't just Willard that took a beating in Toledo the rules took one to

**ROUND 2** Unbelievably there would be a second round, Willard was a mass of swelling and blood, on shaky legs and wearing a bemused look he incredibly came out for the 2nd session. In the early going Willard tries to fend of the aggressive challenger who forces him back against the ropes and throws numerous punches that bounce of Willard's damaged face. Jack belted Willard with a huge right hand that made him stumble across the ring; the challenger was in hot pursuits throwing punches from all angles, punches fell on Willard like so much rain. The champion was barely able to protect his bloodied face and barely threw a punch, all he could do was take punches and hold Dempsey in close. Jess Willard was so incredibly brave to take a savage beating as he reeled around the ring; he was at the mercy of a man who didn't know the meaning of the word.

**ROUND 3** Somehow Jess Willard was still standing but he had precious little offer, the fight should have been over a long time ago to prevent further damage but like a brave soldier and a proud man still Willard fought on. He actually managed to land a few punches in the early part of the third but soon the old pattern returned as Dempsey kept on punishing the champion from all angles. The round ended and with his legs shaking and his face re arranged courtesy of the Manassa Mauler. A white towel, stained with the former champions blood fluttered into the ring, finally it was over for Jess Willard

There was a new heavyweight champion made on July 4th 1919, when the fallen fighter was asked if he would try to regain the title he accepted the fact that he couldn't beat Dempsey, he was happy to go back to his farm in Kansas with his money in his pocket, he was beaten horrible, but he was happy. For years after the fight conspiracy theories of loaded gloves being used to assist Dempsey in destroying Willard came and went but one thing remained was that Dempsey was one the most aggressive, hardest hitting, smartest and fondly remembered heavyweight fighter of all time. He did what he had to do in Toledo, Jack Johnson said that no man would ever knock out Jess Willard and that is quite the compliment to both of the fighters in Toledo on July 4th, 1919.