

ADVERTISING STAR



## George Foreman: Heavyweight Boxing Champion and World-Renowned Businessman

[By Heather Jung]

Despite being known for several decades for his boxing career, George Foreman is now one of the most recognized faces on television thanks to his advertising campaigns for his famous product, the “George Foreman Lean Mean Fat Reducing Grilling Machine.”

Born in Marshall, Texas, Foreman was a troubled youth and had multiple run-ins with the law. He eventually joined the Job Corps in an effort to stay out of further trouble. While in the Corps, however, his problems remained, and he was often found fighting with other trainees. Someone took notice of his natural fighting skills and introduced him to boxing.

Foreman burst onto the boxing scene at just 19, taking a gold medal at the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games. Over the next several decades, Foreman participated in 81 fights, winning 76. By 1971, he had a record of 32-0. In 1973, he battled the previously undisputed heavyweight champion, Joe Frazier. In the fight, broadcast from Kingston, Jamaica, underdog Foreman went on to win by knocking out the defending champ. Foreman successfully defended his title twice, once against Jose Roman and the second time against Ken Norton.

In 1974, Foreman’s title was once again challenged, this time by Muhammad Ali, in one of boxing’s most famous battles, “The Rumble in the Jungle.” He eventually forced Ali to the ropes but was unable to land crucial punches to his head. After

eight rounds of fighting, Foreman, who had been wildly trying to break Ali’s defenses, was exhausted. When Ali landed a series of blows to Foreman’s head, the man who had seemed almost indestructible for more than half a decade was knocked out for the first (and only) time in his career. Foreman took a year-long break from boxing but soon returned in 1976. That year, he defeated Ron Lyle, Scott LeDoux, and Dino Dennis, as well as Frazier in a rematch.

Foreman retired from boxing in 1977 after being beaten in a 12-round fight by Jimmy Young in Puerto Rico. After becoming seriously ill upon returning home, he was frightened by his feelings of emptiness and despair and turned to Christianity. He surprised America in 1987 by deciding to return to boxing at the age of 38. Despite weighing nearly 270 pounds and being out of shape, he went on to win five fights. Over the next few years, he seemed to return to his previous undefeatable ways, until he was defeated by Evander Holyfield in 1991. He continued to fight until 1997, retiring after a loss to Shannon Briggs. Two subsequent fights (one in 1999 and one in 2004) were planned, but both fell through.

In addition to having an illustrious boxing career, Foreman had established himself as a businessman by 1989, selling products such as mufflers and grills on TV. In 1995, Foreman began promoting the Lean Mean Fat Reducing Grilling Machine, which has sold more than 80 million units to date. In order to promote the grill, Foreman appeared in numerous infomercials, making him one of the most widely recognized advertising figures. In 2004, he also began to market and advertise his own line of “Big and Tall” clothing for Casual Male. He also appears in television ads for Meineke Car Care Centers.

### ON THE NET

George Foreman  
[www.georgeforeman.com](http://www.georgeforeman.com)

iGrill with George (the Lean Mean Fat Reducing Grilling Machine)  
[igrillwithgeorge.com](http://igrillwithgeorge.com)

The Rumble in the Jungle  
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rumble\\_in\\_the\\_Jungle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rumble_in_the_Jungle)

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