

Time will tell

by BRIAN LOCKHART

We were gathered around the television set, my dad, my brother and I, to watch heavyweight champion Joe Frazier defend his title against George Foreman in Kingston, Jamaica.

Frazier was the overall favourite, despite being several inches shorter than Foreman, who also had an 8-inch reach advantage.

We were expecting a long fight.

Then, BAM! Around 1:45 into the first round, Foreman delivered a hard right that dropped Frazier to the canvas.

I still remember legendary sportscaster Howard Cosell yelling, 'Down goes Frazier! Down goes Frazier! Down goes Frazier!'

Frazier staggered to the neutral corner to take the mandatory 8-count.

Everyone was shocked that Frazier was hurt so early in the fight.

As boxing matches go, this one is legendary.

Foreman knocked Frazier down two more times in the first round. Frazier was obviously in a lot of trouble.

By today's standards, the ref would have stopped the fight after the second knockdown because clearly Frazier was hurt and not able to defend himself.

Maybe there was too much money involved to worry about a fighter's physical condition after being knocked senseless.

When they came out for the second round, it was brutal to watch.

Foreman knocked Frazier to the canvas again. The second time Frazier hit the canvas, he was so disoriented that he swung, and his own momentum sent him down.

Foreman pinned Frazier on the ropes, and Cosell described the scenario as 'target practice' as Foreman pummelled a defenceless Frazier, until he again hit the canvas.

Finally, the ref waived his arms and stopped the fight.

This era and the several years previous are referred to as the 'Golden Age' of boxing.

It was a time when championship fights and even fights between top boxers were broadcast on prime-time television as special events.

It was a time when names like Joe Frazier, George Foreman, Muhammad Ali, Sonny Liston, Floyd Patterson, Jimmy Ellis, and Jerry Quarry were well known.

Now I couldn't even tell you who the heavyweight champion is.

'I want to be alone,' uttered Greta Garbo in her slight Swedish accent in the 1932 film, Grand Hotel.

Garbo is considered by many to be the greatest movie star of all time.

I have a DVD copy of her 1939 film, *Ninotchka*, which was famously touted as the film where 'Garbo laughs.' Although she didn't laugh very convincingly.

She had a rather serious persona.

Garbo was on screen during a period called the 'Golden Age of Hollywood,' which ran from around 1930 to 1960. At the time, five major studios ran Hollywood, and stars like Humphrey Bogart, Cary Grant, Grace Kelly, Marilyn Monroe, and Rita Hayworth were the big draws at the box office.

It was a time of Mid-Atlantic accents from actors who were trained on the stage, spoke clearly, and you heard every word they said.

The Golden Age of Hollywood came to a close with a combination of things, including the introduction of television, the blacklisting of communists, and anti-trust legislation that attacked the five main studios.

Films and the star system changed after that era.

However, some of the greatest films of all time were made after the Golden Age, and Hollywood continues to produce great movies.

Typically, a period in history is referred to as a Golden Age when certain events create a special era that defines a culture or series of events.

It could be a time when culture is flourishing, there are breakthroughs in science and technology, a time of economic prosperity, or political stability and good governance.

By those definitions, the 1950s were probably the last great decade that could be called a Golden Age, where all those things seemed to be in place.

So, what is happening right now that will define this era we are currently living in?

I can't really think of anything that will define this era ? but I think an era is usually defined when it's over, not currently happening.

Science, technology, and communications have made great leaps forward over the past two decades. Maybe that will figure into the history books in the future.

I have friends, and I've heard some sports commentators say we are currently living in the Golden Age of NFL football. I don't watch the sport, so I have no idea about that.

I would love to read the history books 100 years from now and see how they reflect on the first few decades of the 21st century.

Maybe we are experiencing the highest level of some achievement right now, and we just don't know it.

Time will tell.