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TODAY'S TOP 20 FEMALE BOXERS

by Rachel Ellner

The lead role in "On the Waterfront" should never feature a female professional boxer. "I coulda had class, I coulda been a contender, I coulda been somebody" just would not sound credible coming from the women featured here. And yet one word "despite" applies to each of them. Deirdre Gogerty became "somebody" *despite* intense opposition to women's boxing in her native Ireland. Andrea DeShong became a "contender" *despite* making trips halfway across the country to scheduled bouts that never occurred. Kathy Collins became "somebody" *despite* a self-destructive

lifestyle that she turned around to gain three world titles. Laura Serrano had "class" *despite* the humiliation of Mexican authorities canceling a scheduled bout with Isra Girrah. The law preventing her from future bouts has since been overturned.

International Boxing Digest, (then *Boxing Illustrated*) was the first boxing magazine to begin rating the best pound-for-pound professional male boxers in 1988. In keeping with tradition, we now present you with our first attempts — *despite* everything — to rate the twenty best pound-for-pound female professional boxers in the world today.

1. LUCIA FREDECA RIJKER

Born: Dec. 6, 1967, Amsterdam, Neth.
Height: 5 ft. 7 in.
Weight: 136-139 lbs.
Weight Class: Junior Welterweight
Manager: Stan Hoffman
Trainer: Freddie Roach
Promoter: Bob Arum
Gym: Wildcard, L.A.
Style: "Anything she has to" Stan Hoffman
Amateur Career: Kickboxing: 38-0, 36 KOs. Only loss to male 12 lbs. heavier
Notable Wins: Jeannette Witte (WIBF title), 11/20/97
Present Status: WIBF Junior Welterweight Champion
Background: Four-time world kick boxing champion



Lucia Fredeca Rijker

3. REGINA HALMICH

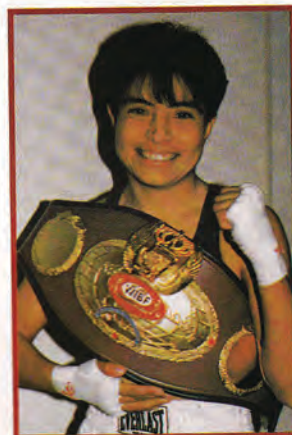
Nickname: Dangerous Lady
Born: Nov. 22, 1976, Karlsruhe, Germany
Height: 5 ft. 3 in.
Weight: 110 lbs.
Weight Class: Flyweight
Manager: Klaus-Peter Kohl
Trainer: Torsten Schmitz
Promoter: Klaus-Peter Kohl
Gym: Universum Box Gymnasium
Style: Aggressive, offensive
Amateur Career: Women not allowed in amateurs in Germany
Notable Wins: Anissa Zamarron, Cheryl Robertson, Kim Messer, Sugar Mijuki
Present Status: WIBF Super Flyweight Champion
Background: European Kickboxing Champion



Regina Halmich

2. LAURA SERRANO

Born: Oct. 20, 1967, Mexico City, Mexico
Height: 5 ft. 6 in.
Weight: 126 lbs.
Weight Class: Featherweight
Manager: Raul Cruz
Promoter: Don King
Gym: Mexico City
Style: "Fastest hands in the world"
Amateur Career: None
Notable Wins: Deirdre Gogerty (WIBF title), 4/20/95
Present Status: WIBF Champion
Background: All-around athlete: national standardswimmer, soccer player; amateur boxing referee
NOTES: Controversial draw w/Christy Martin, 5/7/94



Laura Serrano

4. LEAH MELLINGER

Nickname: The Kitten
Born: July 28, 1972, Lancaster, Pa.
Height: 5 ft. 6 1/2 in.
Weight: 140 lbs.
Weight Class: Junior Welterweight
Manager: Terry Nye
Trainers: Terry Nye, Jose Santiago, Chuck Harsh
Gym: Nye's Gym
Style: Boxer/Counterpuncher
Amateur Career: 12 bouts, 3 (all wins) in USA and Golden Gloves tournaments
Notable Wins: Fredia Gibbs (IFBA title), 3/21/98; Kathy Collins, 9/11/98
Present Status: IFBA Junior Welterweight Champion
Background: Successful amateur; black belt in karate; 13-0 (9 kayoes) in kickboxing



Leah Mellinger

5. VALERIE HENIN-WIET

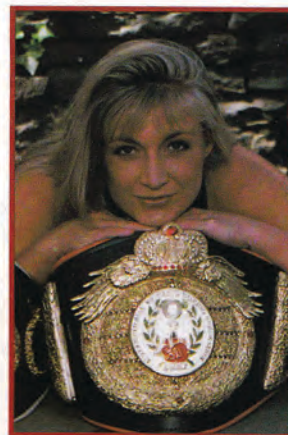
Born: Feb. 3, 1998, Nancy, France
Height: 5 ft. 8 in.
Weight: 147 lbs.
Weight Class: Super Welterweight
Manager: Jimmy Finn
Trainer: Orlando Wiet
Promoter: Non-Aligned
Gym: Punch Gym, Nancy, France
Style: Orthodox
Amateur Career: Three-Time World Kickboxing Champion (WKA, ISKA and WAKO), 32-2, 25 KOs
Notable Wins: Mary Ann Alamager (WIBF title), 11/3/96
Present Status: WIBF Champion
Background: Kickboxing



Valerie Henin-Wiet

6. KATHY COLLINS

Nickname: Wildcat
Born: March 23, 1971, Baltimore, Md.
Height: 5 ft. 5 in.
Weight: 137 lbs.
Weight Class: Junior Welterweight
Manager: Frankie Globuschutz
Trainer: Dominick Marino
Promoter: Dennis Rappaport
Gym: Academy of Boxing for Women, Long Island, N.Y.
Style: Boxer/-Puncher
Amateur Career: Golden Gloves
Notable Wins: Andrea DeShong (Madison Sq. Garden), 8/20/96; Helga Risoy (10/24/97); Christina Berry (IFBA title), 8/2/97; Leah Mellinger 6/20/97 Vacant (WIBF title), 1/10/98; Marisha Sjaaw (IWBF title), 5/24/98
Present Status: Two world titles
Background: 101 lbs. heavier; started boxing to lose weight



Kathy Collins

7. ZULFIYA KOUTDUSOVA

Born: Jan. 11, 1972, Moscow, Russia
Height: 5 ft. 6 in.
Weight: 135 lbs.
Weight Class: Lightweight
Manager: Mark Meltser
Trainer: Mark Meltser
Promoter: Burt Watson, Lenny Baranchuck (Ringside International)
Gym: Gleasons, N.Y. and Moscow, Russia
Style: Good technical skills, jab, great conditioning, and strong inside work
Amateur Career: Kickboxing
Notable Wins: Cora Webber (WBF lightweight title bout), 1/98; Tracy Byrd (IFBA lightweight title bout), 6/98
Present Status: IWBF and IFBA Lightweight Champion
Background: European Kick Boxing Champion



Zulfiya Koutdusova

8. EVA JONES-YOUNG

Nickname: Black Magic
Born: July 14, 1964, South Bend, Ind.
Height: 5 ft. 3 in.
Weight: 116 lbs.
Weight Class: Bantamweight
Manager: Jim C. Fulton
Trainer: Richard D. Young
Promoter: Non-Aligned
Gym: East Side Boxing Club, Kansas City, Mo.
Style: Boxer-Puncher
Amateur Career: Two-year National Karate Champion
Notable Wins: Cheryl Robertson (IWBF title), Theresa Arnold (WIBF title) 1/10/98
Present Status: IWBF-WIBF Bantamweight Champion
Background: Karate
Notes: Southpaw.



Eva Jones-Young

9. JOLENE MARIE BLACKSHEAR

Nickname: The Terminator
Born: May 5, 1971, San Diego, Calif.
Height: 5 ft. 1 in.
Weight: 108-112 lbs.
Weight Class: Flyweight
Manager: Herb Cody
Trainer: Herb Cody
Promoter: Event Sports, Inc.
Gym: Sonoma County Martial Arts Center
Style: Aggressive, very strong; can box or brawl
Amateur Career: 15-0, 13 KOs (kickboxing)
Notable Wins: Anissa Zamarron (IFBA title)
Present Status: IFBA Flyweight Champion
Background: Kickboxing



Jolene Blackshear

10. CHRISTY MARTIN

Nickname: The Coal Miner's Daughter
Born: June 12, 1968, Bluefield, W. Va.
Height: 5 ft. 4 in.
Weight: 135 lbs.
Weight Class: Lightweight
Manager: Debbie King-Lee
Trainer: Jim Martin
Promoter: Don King
Style: Aggressive
Amateur Career: Tough Woman's Contest, West Virginia
Notable Wins: Beverley Szymanski; Deirdre Gogarty; Andrea DeShong
Present Status: WBC Women's Lightweight Champion
Background: Competed in the first nationally televised pay-per-view women's bout, 3/16/96



Christy Martin

11. PARA DRAINE

Nickname: Spokane Spike
Born: Dec. 28, 1972, Spokane, Wash.
Height: 5 ft. 7 in.
Weight: 110 lbs.
Weight Class: Flyweight
Manager: Rod Mahaffey
Trainer: Rick Welliver
Promoter: Non-Aligned
Gym: Spokane, Wash.
Style: Boxer with power
Amateur Career: Yakima, Wash. Junior Golden Gloves Champion, 1995; Tacoma Open Golden Gloves Champion, 1996
Notable Wins: Yvonne Trevino (IWBF title), 5/24/98
Present Status: IWBF Flyweight Champion
Background: Extensive amateur career



Para Draine

12. DEIRDRE GOGARTY

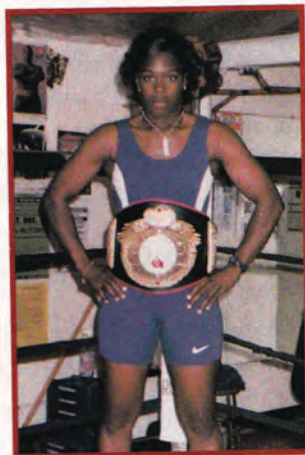
Nicknames: Dangerous Deirdre/ Dirty Dee/Gloves Gogarty
Born: Nov. 10, 1969, Co. Louth, Ireland
Height: 5 ft. 6 in.
Weight: 125 lbs.
Weight Class: Featherweight
Manager: Beau Williford
Trainer: Beau Williford
Promoter: Beau Williford
Gym: Beau Williford's Boxing Academy
Style: Boxer/Puncher
Amateur Career: None
Notable Wins: Bonnie Canino (WIBF title), 3/2/97
Present Status: Laid off due to right shoulder injury sustained in sparring before 1/10/98 WIBF title bout
Background: Inspired by her idol, Barry McGuigan; began boxing at 17
Notes: Competed in the first professional female boxing matches ever held in Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Minnesota, Colorado



Deirdre Gogarty

13. LISA ESTED

Nickname: The Heat
Born: July 10, 1966, Brooklyn, N.Y.
Height: 5 ft. 6 in.
Weight: 140-147 lbs.
Weight Class: Super Welterweight
Manager: Earl (Pancho) Melton
Trainers: Luis Resto (head trainer),
Joe Spear (co-trainer)
Promoter: Special FX
Gym: Special FX Gym
Style: Boxer/Puncher
Amateur Career: Karate
Notable Wins: Dora Webber
(WIBF title) 8/21/98
Present Status: IWBK Champion
Background: Black belt in karate, 1995



Lisa Ested

14. BRIDGETT RILEY

Nickname: Baby Doll
Born: May 13, 1973, St. Louis, Mo.
Height: 5 ft. 4 in.
Weight: 118 lbs.
Weight Class: Bantamweight
Manager: W.m "Blinky" Rodriguez
Trainer: Lilly Rodriguez
Promoter: Non-Aligned
Gym: Cache and L.A. Boxing
Style: Boxer-Puncher
Amateur Career: Karate, Kickboxing
Notable Wins: Yvonne Trevino
(IFBA title) 2/15/98;
Aicha Lahsen (KO 9, first
title defense), 6/26/98
Present Status: "Ready to Rumble"
Background: Blackbelt in karate, five
time world kickboxing champion



Bridgett Riley

15. DELIA GONZALEZ

Nickname: Chiquita
Born: Nov. 11, 1970, Mexico
Height: 5 ft. 3 in.
Weight: 109-112 lbs.
Weight Class: Flyweight
Manager: Self
Trainer: Antonio Gonzalez
Promoter: Non-Aligned
Gym: Gyms in Las Cruces, New Mexico,
El Paso, Texas
Style: Technical
Amateur Career: None
Notable Wins: Aniss Zamarron
(WIBF bantamweight title
rematch on pay-per-view)
Present Status: Number one contender
in flyweight division (IFBA)
Background: Comes from a family of professional
fighters. Having no interest in other sports,
her father began training her at the age of
eleven. Turned professional at 21.



Delia Gonzalez

16. LENA AKESSON

Born: Aug. 10, 1967,
Stockholm, Sweden
Height: 5 ft. 8 in.
Weight: 130 lbs.
Weight Class: Lightweight
Manager: Gary Trevett
Trainer: Luis Lagerman,
Angelo Dundee
Promoter: Non-Aligned
Gym: Royalty Gym, Hollywood, Fla
Style: Boxer-Puncher
Amateur Career: 1-0
Notable Wins: Unanimous
decisions over
Kathy Long, Cora
Webber, Julie Cross
Present Status: IFBA Tourney Champion
Background: Karate and kickboxing instructor.



Lena Akesson

17. SUMAY ANANI

Nickname: Island Girl
Born: Feb. 12, 1972, Kansas City, Mo.
Height: 5 ft. 5 in.
Weight: 140 lbs.
Weight Class: Junior Welterweight
Manager: Berry Becker
Trainer: Berry Becker
Promoter: Fulton Promotions
Gym: East Side Boxing Club,
 Kansas City, Mo.
Style: Slugger
Amateur Career: None
Notable Wins: Stacy Prestage, 9/30/97
Present Status: 10-0, 7 KOs
Background: Began boxing in pursuit
 of an athletic challenge



Sumya Anani

19. ISRA GIRGRAH

Nickname: Raging Beauty
Born: Sept. 16, 1971, United Arab Emirates
Height: 5ft. 4 in.
Weight: 135 lb.
Weight Class: Lightweight
Manager: Debbie King-Lee
Trainer: Xavier Biggs
Promoter: Don King
Gym: Biggs Morrison Boxing, Atlanta, Ga.
Style: Boxer-Dancer
Amateur Career: None
Notable Wins: Angela Buchanan
 (IBF title), 4/11/98
Present Status: Top five contender,
 lightweight-junior welter
Background: Started in 1994 to stay in
 shape; began competing
 one year later
Notes: Controversial loss to Christy Martin, 8/23/97



Isra Girgrah

18. MARISCHA SJAUW

Nickname: La Matadora
Born: Aug. 27, 1971, Paramaribo, Surinam
Height: 5 ft. 6 in.
Weight: 139 lbs.
Weight Class: Welterweight
Manager: J. Valko
Trainer: Luis Lagerman
Promoter: Jimmy Finn
Gym: Royalty Gym, Hollywood, Fla.
Style: CounterPuncher
Amateur Career: None
Notable Wins: Anne Sophie Mathis for
 (European title)
Present Status: European Champion,
 1995
Background: Began boxing with her
 brother for physical conditioning



Marischa Sjauw

20. ANDREA DESHONG

Nickname: Sweet Feet
Born: March 15, 1962, Steubenville, Ohio
Height: 5 ft. 6 in.
Weight: 140 lbs.
Weight Class: Junior Welterweight
Manager: Self
Trainers: Sam Jones, Lee Stevens
Promoter: Jerry Thomas
Gym: People's Choice Boxing Club
Style: Boxer-Puncher
Amateur Career: World Tough Woman
 Champion, 1987, 1988
Notable Wins: Christy Martin, 11/4/89
 Helga Risoy, 2/12/97
Background: Attended the Cambridge
 Racket Club and met
 future trainer Chris Furry



Andrea DeShong

The author wishes to thank Jimmy Finn of Ampro Sports International and Rod Mahaffey, editor of *The Lady Boxer*, for their kind assistance in the preparation of this article.

NEW JERSEY

ATLANTIC CITY—Tropicana Casino & Resort—The eminently successful all-woman format pioneered by Jimmy Finn advanced a notch with this fine card. The main event produced a shocking upset, as two female junior welter champions squared off in a title unification bout.

IBFA title holder Leah Mellinger, 139, Lancaster, Pa., handed IWBf champ Kathy Collins, 138, Plainview, N.Y., her first defeat by a close but correct split decision, 10 (two-minute rounds). A groundbreaker for women's boxing on the east coast, the aggressive Collins took an early lead with a compact attack and telling left hook. Her rangier opponent had difficulty finding her rhythm, but took over when Collins tired in the fourth. Kathy, with her left eye puffing, made a determined effort to turn it back into a slugfest in the sixth, but it would be her last hurrah. Leah had drawn even by the eighth, and had a strong round in the ninth. Both fought as if the fight was up for grabs in the tenth, and Collins' vigorous hooking attack left many in the crowd with the impression she was winning the exchanges; but Leah's quick straight counters were beating her to the punch, leaving many of those left hooks dying. Scoring: all 96-94; John Riley for Collins, George S. Colon and Kason Cheeks for Mellinger. The closeness of the tallies belies the fact that the judges had split on a whopping seven rounds! Mike Benitez-Ortega, referee.

Leona Brown, 121, Pawling, N.Y., won the vacant IWBf junior featherweight title with a unanimous decision over Katie Burton, also 121, Thunder Bay, Ont., 10. The sturdy Brown used good head movement to penetrate the standup boxing of the elfin Katie, then bombarded her with rights. Scoring: Jean Williams, 98-93; Debra Barnes, 98-92; Eva Shain, 99-

91. Tony Perez, referee.

Rangy southpaw Kathy Williams, 113, Thunder Bay, Ont., won a unanimous decision over Jayla (Little Green Eyes) Ortiz, 117, Santa Fe, N.M., six. Scoring: Jean Williams, 58-56; Debra Barnes and Al Bennett, both 59-55. Lindsey Page, referee.

Classy Margaret Sidoroff, 111, Windsor, Ont., stopped lefty Rose Johnson, 117, Rockville, Md., who failed to come out for round three of their slated four. A right counter had dropped Johnson in the first. Al Huggins, referee.

Local ticket seller Jamillia Lawrence, 115, Atlantic City, appeared lucky to get a unanimous decision over Toni Taylor, 119, Lincoln, Eng., four. Lawrence moved better and looked more like a boxer, but the crude Taylor landed more of the punches. Scoring: Barnes and Williams, both 40-36; Shain, 39-37. Al Huggins, referee.

Timekeeper—Art Spell.

Ring Announcer—Dean Calabrese.

Promoter—Diane Lee Fischer (Dee Lee Promotions).

Matchmaker—Eddie Glynn.

Attendance—7,000 (estimated).

Television—ESPN2.

At Ringside—J.R. Jowett.
 09-11-98