

# Micky Ward

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**"Irish" Micky Ward** (born October 4, 1965) is a junior welterweight professional boxer from Lowell, Massachusetts. Ward won three New England Golden Gloves titles as an amateur before turning pro in 1985. After a stretch of defeats in the early 1990s, Ward hung up the gloves for a period of three years. He returned in 1994 with a vengeance, winning nine straight fights and earning some fights against big name fighters like Arturo Gatti.

Ward is known for his devastating left hook to the body and his ability to withstand punishment while waiting to land his trademark shot. A perennial underdog, he has been known to lose every minute of every round and then suddenly drop his opponent in the late rounds with a single shot to the body (as he did against Emanuel Augustus (Then known as Emanuel Burton), Antonio Diaz, and Shea Neary).

After a 15-year pro career, the veteran Ward gained widespread fame in his May 20, 2002 fight with Arturo Gatti, which was broadcast live on HBO. In 2001, Ward's brutal battle with Emanuel Augustus [July 13, 2001] had been named the Ring Magazine Fight of the Year, and it served to set up the much-anticipated Ward-Gatti matchup. *Ward-Gatti I* saw both fighters withstand an amazing amount of punishment through 10 rounds of non-stop action. Ward, who dropped Gatti in the ninth round with a vicious left hook to the body, won the fight by majority decision.

*Ward-Gatti I* was hailed as the "Fight of the Century" by boxing fans and writers, and Round 9 of that bout was called "The Round of the Century" by Emanuel Steward, who co-hosted the fight live on HBO. Ring Magazine named Ward-Gatti I the Fight of the Year for 2002. Both fighters showed such heart and sportsmanship through the grueling fight that many felt the fight helped to revive a sport which has been plagued by showboating, corruption, and greed since the 1970s.

In their rematch, Gatti fought a smart fight and neutralized Ward's body punching power by boxing and staying low. In the third round, Gatti knocked Ward to the canvas with a thundering overhand right which landed on Ward's ear. Ward, stunned, sprawled into the turnbuckle and stayed down for the mandatory 8 count. Nobody, especially Gatti (who after the fight called it "the hardest punch I've ever landed") expected Ward to get up, never mind finish the fight. It later turned out that Gatti had fractured his right hand with that shot.

Commentators noted that if it had been any other fighter than Ward, the referee would have stopped the fight in the third round. Indeed, some feel the fight should have been stopped as Ward took an additional 7 rounds of punishment in a lopsided Gatti victory. Ward and Gatti earned over one million dollars a piece for *Ward-Gatti II*.

Ward and Gatti had a third fight, on June 8 of 2003. Despite dropping Gatti in round six, Ward lost by a ten round unanimous decision. Ward-Gatti 3 was named Fight of the Year for 2003 by Ring Magazine, which meant that Micky Ward had earned that honor three times. This put him in the company of such all-time greats as Rocky Marciano, Carmen Basilio, and Muhammad Ali.

While Ward has never held a world title, he won the respect and admiration of many fans worldwide at this late stage in his career. Before his final fight with Gatti, Micky Ward announced his plans to retire after the fight.

In his native Massachusetts, Micky Ward is regarded as a working class hero, a blue-collar athlete who has overcome many difficulties in life and prevailed through determination and hard work.

The song "The Warrior's Code" by Boston punk band Dropkick Murphys is dedicated to Micky Ward, and his photograph appears on the cover of the album of the same title.

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