Corbett-Mitchell Prize Fight
(January 25, 1894)

When it was published that an effort was being made to arrange a prize fight between J. J. Corbett, of the United States, and Charles Mitchell, of England, for the championship of the world, a club was organized here in October, 1893, known as the Duval Athletic Club, composed of local people, for the purpose of securing the fight for Jacksonville. Immediately arose the question of the legality of such an exhibition under the State laws, while considerable public opposition was voiced with respect to having it here. An offer was made by the club acceptable to the principals and the preliminary arrangements were being made, when the governor issued notice that force would be used, if necessary, to prevent the fight. The purse offered was $20,000, the winner to receive all. When it became known generally that the authorities were planning to stop the fight, other places over the country sought to obtain it, among them Cripple Creek, a mining town in Colorado, which offered $40,000 for it.

Corbett arrived in Jacksonville about the middle of December and went into training at Mayport. Mitchell came two weeks later and was arrested upon arrival, to test the law; he gave bond for $1,500 and established training quarters at St. Augustine. The governor ordered Sheriff Broward of Duval County to use force to prevent the fight, and finally ordered the second battalion of State troops to Jacksonville to assist him. The Duval Athletic Club played its trump card the day before the fight, when it secured an injunction against interference by the authorities.

The fight occurred on the afternoon of January 25, 1894, at the old fairgrounds in Fairfield. The betting at the ringside was 100 to 40 in favor of Corbett. The gong sounded at 2:30 p.m. Referee: Kelly.

ROUND ONE