

New Year's Resolutions

Written by Steve Kim

Monday, 30 December 2002 21:00

A new year is upon us, which means it's time for new years resolutions. Yeah, never mind that most resolutions are broken, oh, around the third week of January; everybody still makes them.

Here are my resolutions that I'd make for some of the luminaries in the sport of boxing.

* Floyd Mayweather: No more excuses. Anyone else sick of listening to 'the Pretty Boy' whine about what ailments he came into the fight with? Whether it's his fragile hands, a bum shoulder or his squabbles with his promoter Bob Arum, he always has an alibi. Hey Floyd, nobody cares, you get paid plenty to perform and those that buy tickets don't care that you might have a hangnail; they want nothing but the best effort out of you.

Mayweather reminds me of former Los Angeles Dodger slugger Mike Marshall, who's second home seemed to be the disabled list. The bottom line is this guy is lucky to be a boxer where he only has to perform once every 6 months- he simply couldn't handle the rigors of an NBA, NFL or baseball season. Ask any athlete if they are ever 100-percent healthy after the first day of training camp or spring training and they'll laugh at you.

Injuries and ailments are a part of the job, overcoming them is what makes a true professional. Mayweather still hasn't grasped that concept.

* Jim Gray: Respect. I guess this little weasel is whom Aretha Franklin was talking about in her song. Think about it, have you ever seen a guy be so disrespectful to fighters in post-fight interviews like this guy. Don't even mention HBO's Larry Merchant- he isn't afraid to ask the tough questions like a true journalist and he's consistent. Gray looks at boxing as a secondary gig and looks down on boxers in general.

Don't believe me? Just compare and contrast his softball interviews that he does for NBC and the hatchet jobs he does on Showtime.

* Max Kellerman: No more over-hyping New York boxers. Look, I get along and respect Max, but when you look up the term 'East Coast Bias' in Webster's, his picture may be used as the definition of it. From Zab Judah to James Butler and to Tokumbo Olajide, he'll have you enshrined in Canastota if you come out of the Big Apple.

What's worse are the excuses he'll come up with for his New Yorkers when they fall on their faces. Max is great for boxing but he's gotta realize New York hasn't been a player on the boxing scene for at least 20 years.

* Crocodile: A new catchphrase. You know Crocodile, right? He was Mike Tyson's hype-man for all these years...the guy with the menacing shades and the army fatigues who used to scream, "GUERRILLA WARFARE" at the top of his lungs over and over again.

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I've heard that enough and it's about as played out as 'Whoop, there it is' and it's time he came up with a new one. All the great ones can add to their repertoire.

* HBO: Admit they acknowledge the titles. Stop being the Hypocritical Boxing Organization and just stop saying that you don't recognize these organizations. The latest example of their double-talk? Well, for years they dogged John Ruiz and his WBA title, suddenly Roy Jones challenges Ruiz and HBO is hyping this up as some sort of historic challenge of a light heavyweight trying to capture a heavyweight title.

Yeah, the same title they had basically trashed for years.

* Joe Cortez: No more over-officiating. His line is that, 'He's firm but he's fair'. I'd argue about that the last couple of years but my biggest gripe with him is that he seems to make himself waaaaay too visible during fights and gets too involved. Nobody is there to watch him and he should just let the fighters fight.

Too often I see these fights with Cortez lose their flow as Cortez continually interrupts the action with his admonishments and warnings. Joe, take a step back and let us watch what we came to see.

* Don Turner: Stop living off of Holyfield-Tyson I- If you ever talk to this guy, he'll talk as though he invented boxing. And his big coup was co-training Evander Holyfield against Mike Tyson. 'The Real Deal' upset Tyson and suddenly Turner was being hailed as the new Chappie Blackburn and he became a media darling.

My question is this, did he suddenly teach Holyfield how to fight 35 fights into his career? Also, I contend that my mother and I could work Holyfield's corner and he would whip Tyson everyday of the week and twice on Sunday. And ask yourself this, when was the last time he was in the winning corner for a big fight?

* Newspaper writers: Start crediting the Internet. Ok, this is a sore subject with me, but too many times I've seen stories from the major newspaper scribes who amazingly have stories that are eerily similar to stories that I've read on the internet (or that I've written myself) and use quotes that I got in one-on-one interviews and they don't attribute their sources- the internet.

When I take quotes or info from a story I make a point to give credit where it's due. Now, I just wish these guys would do the same.

* Roy Jones: no more hip-hop entrances. Roy, you're a magnificently gifted prizefighter, you can also play just a bit of hoops, but your rhyming skills are that of Shaquille O'Neal. In other words, you're doing street nursery rhymes not Nas.

Please, oh please, stop embarrassing yourself and the sport with your cheesy as nacho's attempt to become a hip-hop performer. His last entrance/performance reminded me of one of those really bad Sir-Mix-Alot videos of the early 90's.

* Panama Lewis: an exit out of the game. You remember Lewis right, the guy who gave Aaron Pryor the mysterious white bottle before the 14th round of his bout against Alexis Arguello,

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which seemed to give 'the Hawk' a sudden burst of energy that enabled Pryor to brutally KO Arguello. Afterwards, Pryor would skip out on his post-fight drug test.

Then there was the fight with Luis Resto, where he would tamper with his gloves between rounds, and bearing the brunt of this tomfoolery was Billy Collins who's faced was turned into a bloody mess. Collins, in the aftermath of this brutality committed suicide. For this, Lewis was banned permanently from working a corner. But that doesn't mean that he can't go into the gym and train fighters and even attend fights.

The bottom line is simple, this man has no place in the game of boxing and boxing shouldn't tolerate him in any way.

* Cedric Kushner: no more gimmicks. This guy has tried everything from the disastrous 'ThunderBox' to one-day \$100,000 heavyweight tournaments- and all have failed miserably.

He can put on a boxing version of 'Survivor' or 'Real World' if he wants but the reality is, boxing fans want good fights and interesting fighters, nothing more, nothing less.

Stop with the shenanigans and stop with the junk.