

It Doesn't Have To Be Over For Tyson

Written by Frank Lotierzo
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A few days back former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson was arraigned and pleaded not guilty to, (third degree-assault, disorderly conduct, and harassment charges stemming from a scuffle outside a Brooklyn Hotel in June). I am very confident that Tyson will be acquitted of these charges, mainly because I believe when the truth comes out it will be shown Tyson was provoked and was defending himself, and not the instigator. However, for once Tyson has a top-flight attorney representing him in the more than capable Mel Sachs.

Maybe the hiring of Mel Sachs is a sign of good things to come for Tyson. In hiring Sachs, Tyson has shown brilliant judgement for once in his life. Sachs is one of the most respected criminal lawyers and legal scholars in the country. This tells me that Tyson just may be serious about putting his career back together and making one last run at winning back the title. And those who follow boxing know, with the exception of Lennox Lewis there isn't one heavyweight currently fighting today that an in shape and focused Tyson isn't capable of beating. Lewis is the only heavyweight that even Tyson at the top of his game would be an underdog against. And this is due to Lewis' size and reach advantages over Tyson which makes for a tough match up for him.

One thing Tyson has in his favor is that he is still the biggest draw in boxing. This equates to him being able to chose who he fights until it's for the title. Basically, there are two fighters who if you're managing Tyson that you want to keep him away from, Evander Holyfield, and David Tua. Even a declining Holyfield is bad for Tyson psychologically, and I question whether Tyson believes he can beat Holyfield. Although Tua is not as complete of a fighter as Tyson, he would still be very dangerous because of his power and they would clash at ring center and trade. This is risky for Tyson because Tua has the better chin, and would be at his best vs Tyson because he knows what a win over Tyson would do for his career. The good thing about these two fighters is that Tyson doesn't have to fight them unless it's for the title. With the recent showings of both Holyfield and Tua, Tyson has nothing to gain by fighting them and much too lose.

During the past 17 years I've had many intense debates about Tyson regarding his overall standing in heavyweight history. I happen to believe he is over-rated when compared with other all-time greats but, at this time I happen to think he is slightly under-rated and is still capable of winning the title if he is in the proper mental and physical state.

Looking at the current crop of upper tier heavyweights, who is so outstanding among them that a fit and determined Tyson isn't capable of defeating? Maybe the Klitschko's are a bad match up for him but, I question Wladimir's chin, and Vitali's skill level, I say he's 50-50 versus either of them. Chris Byrd, all Tyson has to do is watch how Ike Ibeabuchi fought Byrd by going to the body early to take his legs away and he'd stop Byrd like Ibeabuchi did. Roy Jones? I'm not buying Roy Jones is the man in the heavyweight division just because he took Ruiz to boxing school. Seeing how Ruiz shook Jones with one right hand in the first round, I'm confident Tyson's right would put Jones to sleep. Also, from a style vantage point, Jones is made for Tyson. Jones doesn't have the size, strength, or punch to worry Tyson or keep him from trying

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to kill Jones.

Who does that leave? Rahman, Tyson would go through Rahman. Rahman doesn't have the punch to keep Tyson from working him over, and he doesn't have the chin to stand up to Tyson's power. Rounding out the rest of the top heavyweights are John Ruiz, Kirk Johnson, and Fres Oquendo. Neither of these three have anything in their arsenal to beat Tyson with, and he has plenty to beat them with. Remember, were not including Holyfield or Tua because they are fighters who could be a stumbling block for Tyson and they don't hold any of the current titles. At the worst, Tyson is among the top five heavyweights in the world.

The way I see it, a rededicated Mike Tyson is still capable of salvaging his career. To think Tyson's days as a force in the heavyweight division are completely over is selling him a little short. Tyson still retains a large portion of his overall skills, he can still punch and has retained much of his hand speed. The problem he has is inactivity. If Tyson were to get serious and fight regularly for the next year, he is more than capable of reclaiming the title, especially in this sub par era of heavyweights and the pending retirement of Lewis. Today's heavyweight division is littered with fighters in their thirties, and middleweights who are now heavyweights! Oh yes, if Tyson surrounded himself with the right handlers, and was fighting regularly, I think he could win the title again. The bottom line is, is Tyson capable of truly dedicating himself to do what's needed to give himself one last chance to be called champ again? That's the question!