

Tyson vs. Jones: The Fight That Should But Won't

Written by Frank Lotierzo

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For one, a win over the other guarantees him a high spot among the all-time best pound-for-pound fighters in boxing history. And for the other, a win resurrects a once brilliant career. However, the risk-reward factor is very steep for both fighters. For that reason alone is why we may never see the biggest and most anticipated fight that can be made today, Tyson vs. Jones.

Without a doubt the biggest fight in boxing that could be made today is Mike Tyson vs. Roy Jones. Since the heyday of Sugar Ray Leonard, Tyson has to be regarded as the biggest draw and most well known and recognized fighter in boxing. On the other hand, Roy Jones is probably the most talented and skilled fighter since Ray Leonard. There cannot be any dispute, Tyson vs. Jones would garner attention throughout the world. From an interest standpoint, this is definitely a Super-Fight.

From the time he turned pro, through his incarceration, I've always said that Mike Tyson was the most brilliantly managed fighter in gloved-history? His perception among his legion of fans is undeniable. They simply believe that it's his birth right to be considered one of the greatest heavyweights of all time. In my opinion, Tyson was a great talent. However, a flawed fighter when it comes to character and toughness when measured against the greatest heavyweights in history.

The fact that he hasn't won a signature fight since beating Michael Spinks back in June of 1988, 15 years ago, doesn't matter in the least. The bottom line is, the name Tyson needs to be one half of the billboard to make one of the two or three biggest fights in boxing at this time. That's right, Tyson's name matched with another perceived top fighter of today is the biggest fight that can be made.

Tyson versus Toney, Jones, Byrd, either Klitschko, or Lewis, is bigger than any other two fighters that can be paired. If Tyson fought James Toney the same night Lennox Lewis fought Roy Jones, Tyson-Toney would outdraw Lewis-Jones by a 3-1 margin.

Enter Roy Jones. At this time I think it's pretty much accepted that Jones is the most skilled fighter in boxing. Yea, maybe two or three other fighters can make a good claim, but I'd bet in a poll of boxing writers and fans worldwide, Jones would receive the most votes for the top spot. The talent of Roy Jones cannot be questioned. His skill level and talent, matched with Tyson's power and fan appeal make Tyson-Jones the most anticipated fight in boxing.

Throughout his career, Roy Jones has been a master outside of the ring almost as good as he's been one in it. Jones has orchestrated his career in such a manner that he keeps most of us guessing about what he'll do next. His ring credentials are hard to deny. He has clearly beaten the two great fighters he has faced in his career, Hopkins and Toney. At the same time it can be argued that Hopkins was still very green, and wasn't ready for a fighter with the overall

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experience of Jones when they fought. Against Toney, most everyone knows the poor shape Toney was in, and the problems that were surrounding him outside of boxing at the time. Even though his fights with Hopkins and Toney went to the scorecards, there is no disputing that Jones clearly bettered both of them.

To his credit, Jones won a portion of the heavyweight title when he decisioned John Ruiz in his last fight. Although he must be given all due praise for this accomplishment, let's not forget that it was against Ruiz. Yes, on the outside Jones' mastery of Ruiz looks impressive, but it doesn't come close to matching Michael Spinks feat of winning the legitimate title from Larry Holmes. I don't care that Holmes was 35, he was still undefeated and recognized as the top heavyweight in the world in September of 1985. If you want to argue something, argue that Spinks got a gift decision in their rematch.

In defeating Ruiz, Jones joined Michael Spinks as the only reigning light heavyweight champs to capture the heavyweight title. However, what did Jones beating Ruiz really say about him? That he could beat a fighter who outweighed him by 27 pounds? I don't think anyone questioned that before he fought Ruiz. What if Billy Conn had to beat John Ruiz instead of Joe Louis to win the heavyweight title? I think it's safe to say that the odds would have been in his favor. Same as if Archie Moore had to beat Ruiz instead of Marciano, or if Bob Foster had to beat Ruiz instead of Frazier. And please, don't even think it! No way Jones would have beat the once beaten Louis of 1941, the undefeated Marciano of 1955, or the undefeated Frazier of 1970!

Again, I'm not taking anything from Jones. The point is that we really don't know how to evaluate him when matched with a top tier heavyweight. Obviously, he has totally cleaned out the light heavyweight division and it's almost pointless for him to continue in it. That's why Tyson-Jones makes so much sense, and it would give both fighters what they need at this time.

For Tyson, a fight with Jones would really do wonders for him and his career. The money he would make would clear up whatever financial problems that he has. And a win over Jones would skyrocket his standing and perception to a place it hasn't been since right before he fought Holyfield the first time. For Jones, there are a million reasons why this fight makes sense for him as well.

First of all, he would be facing a severely eroded and stagnant Tyson. So a win is not inconceivable. Also, if Jones were to pull a win out over Tyson, his place in history could never be denied. Some may say that it was over a faded Tyson, but no one would ever again be able to question his heart and chin without coming off as a total idiot. Another thing in Jones' favor is that Tyson is not a big heavyweight. This fight should definitely be made, it's the perfect fight for both of them.

Unfortunately It Will Never Happen

For the reasons I stated earlier about the brilliance in which both the careers of Mike Tyson and Roy Jones have been handled, is why I believe this fight won't happen. Tyson is smart enough to see that unless he's as shot as Holyfield, Jones has nothing for him. For the reasons that

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Tyson knew that Foreman was wrong for him, the opposite applies with Jones. From a style standpoint, he knows Jones is made for him.

On the other hand, I believe that Jones is too smart to let this fight be made. Unless Jones' is convinced Tyson is as bad as Holyfield right now, I think he goes in another direction. Jones must certainly know that he doesn't have the punch to hurt or put any fear in Tyson. He must know that when Tyson sees him, he views him as a piece of fresh meat that he can tear through. Without Jones being able to hurt or rock Tyson, how could he possibly keep him off in order to try and move and box? Tyson would be all over him like a wet T-shirt throwing bombs. If Jones knows anything, it's that he could lose to Tyson in a very convincing fashion.....like a one-punch knockout. The last thing Jones wants is to go out like Michael Spinks.

Tyson may not be the fighter he once was, but it still takes an exceptional fighter to beat him. The fighter who can beat Tyson must be as strong as him or stronger. He must have an outstanding chin because he's going to get nailed. The fighter must have some power to slow him down and make him hesitate and doubt himself. He also must have no fear of him. I don't think Jones has enough of those traits to beat Tyson. Even though he has the speed advantage, I think Tyson's strength and power totally offset it. Jones would be so worried about Tyson catching him, I think he'd be more concerned with surviving than winning? I say Tyson is too much for Jones and knocks him out if they meet within the next year! But I doubt we'll see it?