

To The Max: Shut Up And Think Before You Talk

Written by Frank Lotierzo

Saturday, 25 October 2003 18:00

I'm tired of hearing how Max Kellerman and his enthusiasm are good for boxing. This is offered as an excuse every time he has said something foolish, which has been a weekly occurrence. Lately, he has been out in left field with some of his comments. The guy has said more ridiculous and moronic things about boxing than anyone has on a national forum in quite sometime. And don't hand me the crap that those who admonish him are jealous of his high profile. What boxing junkie wouldn't love to have a voice that is heard nationally? That's the problem!

The fact that he is seen and heard throughout the country talking boxing is what's so annoying. He makes so many nonsensical statements that it's frustrating knowing that some are actually giving credence to what he says. The scary part is that some fringe boxing fans accept some of his remarks as being fact. What's scary to me is having a new generation of boxing fans fostering their interest and beliefs off of what he has said over the past few years, as if it were fact. How can a guy be so sure about the outcome in a hypothetical fight, when he incorrectly interprets what happened in an actual fight, like Mayorga-Forrest. For anyone to score the Mayorga-Forrest rematch 8-4 in favor of Forrest, is undeniable proof that they're not sure of what they are watching. Max is a grown man, and know's that he will be held accountable for anything that he says. It comes with any high profile position.

Look, I don't care that he's not a good fight handicapper. That means absolutely nothing to me. Most fighters are usually not accurate at projecting the winner in upcoming fights. Are we going to say that they don't know what they're talking about because they picked a fight wrong? I think not. However, with Kellerman, it's his reasoning and his interpretation and scoring of a fight that troubles me. Although he seems to be able to justify just about anything he says.

And in regard to his knowledge of boxing history and his enthusiasm. I talk to three or four friends weekly who know every bit as much or more about boxing than he does, and it's not their occupation or profession. They also share the same passion and excitement for boxing as he does.

The one thing that has bothered me over the past few months, is his Plaster-Sainting of Roy Jones. Although I may not be quite as high on Roy Jones as others, I recognize that he is an all-time great fighter/boxer. However, to say that he is the best fighter ever under 200 pounds is a reach in my opinion. I'm not saying that when his career is over, he won't be included among the greats, but I chose to wait until his career has heard its final bell.

I know that Roy Jones is a great fighter, but I can't overlook the fact that he has dominated the worse era in light heavyweight history. And you know that if he were to get upset by Antonio Tarver, which I don't think will happen, many will say he benefited from fighting in a light heavyweight era that was in the doldrums. In my opinion, this era of 175 pound fighters is one of the thinnest in the 100 year history of the light heavyweight division. Most of the light heavyweights currently fighting will be a week old ghost seven days after they retire. And it's not

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just because of Jones.

If I have to hear Kellerman say that Roy Jones would have defeated Joe Louis and Rocky Marciano one more time, I'm going to sue him for the abuse of the first amendments right to free speech. Wake up Max. You would've never entertained such a thought had Jones never fought and defeated John Ruiz. Remember, it's John Ruiz, a fighter who weighed 183 pounds in his pro debut. You can't possibly be foolish enough to believe that Ruiz is anything close to Louis or Marciano. Many past light heavyweight greats would have defeated Ruiz on the night that he fought Jones.

It's been said by Mr. Kellerman that if Billy Conn could last into the 13th round with Joe Louis, than Jones, who hits harder than Conn would have been able to defeat Louis. How about David Telesco, or a 40 year old junior middleweight champ, Mike McCallum, and a former middleweight champ, Reggie Johnson, taking Jones to a decision. Is there any way that anyone of those three fighters would have made it through two rounds with either Louis or Marciano? That's how silly his example is.

The best fighters that Jones has defeated are Bernard Hopkins, James Toney, a 40 year old Mike McCallum who was fighting out of his weight class, and John Ruiz, a journeyman heavyweight at best. And all four of those fights went the distance with him scoring one knockdown, a flash knockdown over an off balance Toney. If we know nothing else, we know that Louis and Marciano would go the distance with Jones. So the question becomes, could Jones go the entire fight without being caught by either Joe or Rocky? Don't forget, Ruiz planted a good right hand on Jones that shook him. For anyone who needs to have the difference between Louis' right or Marciano's right compared to Ruiz's right explained to them, stop reading this right now and go watch the Hunting and Fishing channel!

Why is it that Louis and Marciano are cited by Kellerman as the heavyweight greats who Jones would have defeated. How come Liston, Ali, Frazier, Foreman, Holmes, Tyson, Holyfield, and Lewis are never mentioned? I know why. The reason is because Louis usually weighed in the neighborhood of 198-202, and Marciano never weighed above 188. This would make it seem that Jones wouldn't be out-sized or out-manned by Louis or Marciano. That is a false perception. Louis and Marciano were true heavyweights. For those who believe that Louis and Marciano weren't big enough to fight in today's heavyweight era, you must be totally infatuated with today's overfed ponderous and cumbersome heavyweights. I'm not saying that applies to all of them, but it does to a majority of them. If a majority of today's heavyweights were in the same shape as Louis and Marciano were, they'd be 25 pounds lighter. And they'd most likely be able to fight 12 or 15 rounds without being on the verge of suffering a stroke.

Does anyone really believe that Jones is anywhere close to the fighter that Muhammad Ali and Larry Holmes were at heavyweight? I highlight Ali and Holmes because they were boxers/movers like Jones. If you believe that, than I have no doubt that you also believe that in real life Bruce Lee could've beaten up 30 Martial artist all at the same time like he did in "Enter The Dragon."

Not only were Joe Louis and Rocky Marciano two of the greatest heavyweight champions in

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history. They are also two of the greatest punchers of all time. I'd like to know the names of the punchers that Jones has faced in his career? Especially as a heavyweight. It's totally asinine that some fans and writers believe that Louis and Marciano were too small for the likes of Liston, Ali, Frazier, Foreman, Holmes, Tyson, Holyfield, and Lewis. The fact is that they were plenty big enough and carried more than enough power to defeat any of the above mentioned on a given night.

It's not a given that Ali or Holmes would've defeated Louis or Marciano. How is it even conceivable that Jones would've been capable of defeating them? What could Jones possibly do with them other than run. Which is exactly what he would've done! His speed wouldn't have meant squat against Louis or Marciano. They both would have tore through him like a hot knife through butter, if he chose to fight. His only other option would be to run and survive. In that case he'd lose every round and the decision if they weren't able to catch him. But, there is no way he could move and fight them at the same time. He couldn't even do that with Ruiz. He's just lucky that Ruiz is slow and has no punch. And that was much more planned than it was luck.

Why is it pushed aside that David Tua blew through Ruiz in 19 seconds. Using Kellerman's logic, I guess that means Tua also would have defeated Louis and Marciano, which is a foolish thought at best. Jones beat a decent heavyweight at best in Ruiz. Let's not forget that if Conn, Moore, and Foster fought Ruiz instead of Louis, Marciano, and Frazier, they would've been the first three light heavyweight champs to beat the heavyweight champ, instead of Michael Spinks.

I have not a morsel of a doubt that Conn, Moore, and Foster would've defeated every light heavyweight that Jones ever fought. I also have no doubt that all three of them would have beaten the Ruiz that Jones beat for the WBA title. Yet in the end, Conn and Moore were demolished by Louis and Marciano. And Jones would have been too. The fact that he won't fight any heavyweights other than hand picked ones indicates that he has doubt?

Again, I'm not taking anything away from Roy Jones. He is an all-time great fighter. However, I cannot and refuse to rank him amongst the greatest heavyweight champions in history. And yes, both Louis and Marciano are two of the greatest heavyweight champions of all time. Maybe seeing Jones beat Ruiz is good enough for Kellerman to say something so ridiculous, but not me. I need to see more from Jones at heavyweight before I even entertain such an idiotic thought?

Writers Note

To those who want to say I'm admonishing Mr. Kellerman because I'm envious of him and his position at ESPN. You couldn't be more wrong. Yes, it would be great to do what he does on ESPN. Any hard core boxing addict like myself would love to be on a show that is viewed nationally. It would be a dream come true! Anyone who denies this, is out right lying. However, I would never put down something he said just for that reason. And I do a radio show myself on the weekends, so I do get to vent my feelings and thoughts.

I have e-mailed Kellerman personally many times inviting him to debate me on my show on the

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topics on which we disagree. He has never responded. I've also had people that we both know ask him to come on, and he won't. I can't say I know him but, we had two conversations on the phone about four years ago. He should know from those conversations that other than being proven wrong, he has nothing to fear.

I will not say he is bad for boxing, because overall he is good for it. What is good about him is that he is an advocate for boxing, something the sport sorely needs. Look, I'm not saying he's wrong all the time but, when he makes outlandish statements that have no merit, he must be held accountable. I would never want to believe that he says things just to provoke a reaction. That is something I could never do. When I speak of boxing, I speak it from the heart. If I said it, I really believe it and know I can back it up with facts and sound reasoning.

That being said, I find fault with much that Mr. Kellerman has to say lately. His repeatedly saying that Roy Jones would defeat Joe Louis and Rocky Marciano is absurd. I also say he is dead wrong in his scoring. Forrest did not beat Mayorga, Mosley did not beat De La Hoya, and Byrd did not beat Oquendo. And lastly, Jones would not have beat either Joe Louis or Rocky Marciano. At least not in my opinion!