

Boxing Addict In Need Of A Fix

Written by Frank Lotierzo

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What is it about boxing that we love reading about it and talking about it so much? When reading and talking about boxing, the choice of topics to go back and forth on are unlimited. When reading a boxing article, what is it exactly that the reader is looking for? Is it to learn something that they may not have already known? If it's an article about a fight or a fighter, is the reader hoping to read something that conforms with his opinion? And if it doesn't, does he dismiss the entire article?

I've said it many times over that boxing fans are unlike any other sports fans. Most hard core boxing fans are very well versed in its history and happenings. As boxing fans we also long to meet people who share the same passion for it as we do. For any who have that such friend, you know exactly what I'm talking about. It's like Wow, I thought I was the only one who thought that, or watched that fight 100 times too.

The funny thing about boxing is that some of the elite sports media try and push it off as a second tier sport. Every time I encounter a newspaper sports columnist, it amazes me how little they know about, and follow boxing. They usually only know of and can talk about four fighters, Ali, Leonard, Tyson, and De La Hoya. And they're usually not even well versed on them.

One of my favorite things to do with sportswriters is to have one of them come on my radio show and co-host with me. Since I live on the outskirts of Philadelphia Pennsylvania, the four major Philly sports teams, (Eagles, Phillies, 76ers, and Flyers) are usually a hot topic. Especially if they're winning. Believe me, I love to argue and debate those four teams and their players. However, there are times when the phone lines do dry up and cool off. This is when I have fun with the writers. When the lines dry up, I'll usually say to the writer during the break, "lets talk some boxing and see if it picks up? Most times the writer will say fine, what do you want to talk about? I'll usually say what ever you feel comfortable with.

When we come back from the break, I'll throw out something like, who thinks Vitali Klitschko has a chance against Lennox Lewis next week? And bang, the phone lines light up like a Christmas tree. Works every time. The columnist is usually shocked and can't believe how many calls we get. The thing that blows em away is how knowledgeable most of the callers are. I bet if I take 15 calls in an hour, 10 or 11 of the callers know twice as much about boxing than my buddy the sports columnist.

Believe it or not, I know for a fact that bringing boxing up as a topic is frowned upon on most National Sportstalk radio stations. That is unless Tyson bites Holyfield, or is convicted of Rape. Then it's OK to talk boxing. Yea sure, only when they can trade off the negative.

The problem most boxing fans suffer is that we are starved for good boxing dialogue and discussion. That's why we gravitate to HBO, Showtime, and ESPN Friday night fights. They have us by the you know what. They're the only game in town, and they know it. There just aren't enough outlets for us to vent our thoughts and feelings. We are stuck waiting for Friday

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night and every third or fourth Saturday night on HBO or Showtime to get our fix. Even at that, we can't exchange our thoughts and share our insight. We are usually being talked at and can't share in any dialogue. This is why I believe when I throw out boxing as a topic, the phone lines always light up.

Think about the major sporting events coming up this weekend. This weekend marks the start of the second half of the NFL season. There are some huge games this weekend that will be comprehensively covered. Also this weekend, there are many big College Football games between ranked teams that are scheduled. College Football will be discussed extensively this week on all sports shows and Sportstalk radio. Believe me, with five college teams with only one loss jockeying for position to move up in the BCS standings in hopes to earn the right to play undefeated and top ranked Oklahoma in the BCS title game, it won't be hard to get your College Football fix this week.

Between Saturday's College Football, and Sunday's NFL games, there is another major sporting event taking place. On Saturday night the two best light heavyweight fighters in the world are fighting for the WBC and IBF light heavyweight titles. In fact one of the fighters is regarded as the best all around fighter in the world. That marks three major sports events this weekend within the span of 48 hours. If you are an NFL or College Football junkie, which I am, it won't be hard to get a fix this weekend. Sportstalk will be littered with those two topics.

Here's the problem, I'm a bigger boxing fan than I am a Football fan, and that's saying something because I really love both the NFL and the College game. However, where do I go to get my Boxing fix? My only outlet is that I'll have two hours to talk about it on my own show. That's great for me, but how about you?

The only exposure most fight fans will have to any Boxing banter this weekend will be, in between fights on ESPN's Friday Night Fights. Again, the fans will only be talked at and have no say that will be heard. Doesn't seem fair does it. The Boxing fan shares every bit the passion that the Football fan does, if not more. Yet he doesn't have the same outlets to talk and share his thoughts.

It frustrates me knowing that Sunday morning Sportstalk will be dominated by who should be ranked number two in the BCS, and the breakdown of that day's upcoming big NFL games. Somewhere between late Saturday night and Noon Sunday, the Jones-Tarver fight will most like be mentioned only in passing. Especially if Jones wins as expected.

My question is why is this so? Is it because real boxing fans are few and far between, or is it that we really don't have a major outlet that promotes and builds on the interest that already exist. I've talked to some who have an interest in trying to launch a national Boxing talk network, we'll see how far that gets? Wouldn't it be great to have a national forum to analyze and preview Jones-Tarver on Saturday, and than discuss the outcome on Sunday ??