

The Least Deserving Challenger

Written by Frank Lotierzo
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Boxing writers and fans can be very tough on the fighters we love and cheer. In fact in many instances we are too tough on them, including myself. We've all been caught up in the moment and yelled he's a bum, or he has no heart about one fighter or another. But I'm willing to bet that after our emotions have quelled we've backed off of those type remarks. We all know that whoever has the guts to step into a Boxing Ring most certainly doesn't lack courage. No way they could go through with it if they did. I don't know who coined the phrase "you don't play Boxing", but I do know truer words may have never been spoken.

I'm willing to cut fighters some slack after an indiscretion. I was too tough on Vitali Klitschko after his fight with Chris Byrd, but I've backed off. Even with the way Wladimir Klitschko lost to Lamon Brewster this past weekend, questioning his heart may be a little to drastic. Remember, taking a punch and having a good chin isn't all about Heart, it's about genes most of the time.

That being said, there is one fighter who I won't cut any slack, because I ran out a long time ago. That fighter is Andrew Golota. Yes, he is a bum! When speaking of Golota I never use the moniker "Foul Pole" as many writers do. I think saying that gives him a pass on his lack of character and Heart, and hides the certified fact that he is a quitter in the truest sense of the word. Calling him a dog is an insult to canines.

When is the last time you saw a fighter at any level literally fight with his corner and tell them he didn't want to go out for the next round? Which is exactly what Golota did with his trainer Al Certo in between the second and third rounds of his October 2000 fight with Mike Tyson. He looked like a five year old baby boy fighting with his mother telling her he didn't want to go to bed. The next time I see that type of coward ness in a Ring will be the second, Golota was the first. If nothing else Golota is the Heavyweight Champion of quitters. I often wonder what warriors like Holyfield, Saad, and Gatti think when they see this big 240 pound sissy back down at the first sign of resistance? I have no doubt that it's an act they can't even fathom.

Golota has carved out a solid and well deserved reputation as being a gutless quitter, along with cheating Boxing fans out of their money. The fact that he's in a position to challenge for a piece of Boxings greatest honor, the Heavyweight title, is an outrage in my opinion. To think he is back in the thick of the division with a chance to be called Champ and make millions of dollars leaves a very bad taste in my mouth. And that's the exact situation Golota is in right now, due to his shot at Chris Byrd's IBF title tonight. How funny is that, Byrd has never been close to quitting once, despite giving up size and weight in mostly all of his fights. Yet he's forced to defend his title and possibly lose it to the biggest quitter who has ever challenged for such an honor.

Forget Golota's two DQ loses to Riddick Bowe, I gave him a reluctant pass on them. What I can't give him a pass on is his first round knockout loss to Lennox Lewis a year after the Bowe rematch. It's not so much that he was knocked out in the first round, but the fact nobody could find him an hour before the fight wandering on the Atlantic City Boardwalk. And then he shows up and looks at Lewis as if he saw Godzilla. Remember, this was Lewis only two years removed

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from being dumped in two rounds by Oliver McCall. It's not like anybody thought Lewis was unbeatable at that time. In fact many respected Boxing scribes actually liked Golota in the fight.

In his next big fight against Michael Grant in 1998, he quits again when the going gets tough. After having Grant down twice in the first round and nearly out, he gets dropped in the ninth round when Grant finally amounts an assault. What does he do when he gets up? He lets the referee know that he doesn't want any more and quits.

Two years after fighting Grant, if that's what it was, he fights Mike Tyson. After a decent first round, Tyson drops him with a beautiful overhand right in the second round. Golota gets up and actually fights back a little bit and makes it through the round. At this time Tyson is merely a three round fighter. Even at his best, Tyson was a dynamo in the first two or three rounds and then slowed down. After making it through what was probably Tyson's best in the first two rounds, Golota submits and quits in between the second and third rounds. To top it off, Golota was so hell bent on NOT fighting that he pushes his sixty something year old trainer Al Certo who tries to shove him out for the third round. Some fighter this Golota. Since quitting and showing the character and Heart of the Cowardly Lion in the Wizard of Oz, Golota has stopped two journeymen since Tyson.

Now King has positioned this Mutt back into the title picture. What really sucks is that he has a very good chance to upset Chris Byrd and win the IBF title. How shameful is that? The really scary thing is that I have this awful feeling that King's luck and magic are looking over his shoulder, I think he's going to beat Byrd. It's not that I think Byrd isn't capable of handling him. It's just a feeling I have that things are going to break his way. If I ever wanted to be more wrong in picking a fight, I can't remember when.

Golota has many things going for him in this fight. He has the style to possibly jab and out Box Byrd from the outside. He has the power to hurt and maybe even stop Byrd if he feels he's behind and has to take some chances leaving himself vulnerable, and he has King who is probably tweaking everything outside the Ring insuring everything turns out right. Golota is so well set up for this fight that even if he loses, as long as he makes a somewhat respectable showing he'll be around for a while. The fact that on April 18th 2004 Andrew Golota could actually have Champ in front of his name is deplorable!!