

## For Shane Mosley, Wright Is Wrong

Written by Frank Lotierzo

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In less than a month, former three time champ Shane Mosley 39-3 (35) will take on Undisputed Jr. Middleweight champ Winky Wright 47-3 (25). Wright is the Undisputed champ because last March 13th, he dominated Mosley over 12 rounds and picked up the WBA and WBC belts to go along with his IBF belt.

It wasn't long ago that Mosley was considered one of the top three or four most complete fighters in boxing. Complete is the word I use to describe boxing's best fighters. I think complete better describes a fighter who most consider one of the best pound-for-pound.

However, that was more than three years ago. Mosley hasn't been on much of a winning streak lately, going 1-3 in his last 4 fights. Since abandoning the lightweight division, Mosley has moved up three weight classes. As a lightweight, he was a beast physically. What I liked about Mosley was that he committed to his punches and wasn't always looking to get out. Whenever a fighter commits to his punches, he increases his chances of getting nailed in return. That wasn't a problem for Mosley while fighting at 135. Because he was much stronger than the other lightweights, his leaky defense wasn't a problem.

Mosley has always been there to be hit, especially with straight right hands. Now fighting at Jr. Middleweight, up 20 pounds from lightweight, Mosley hasn't adjusted and his chin ends of being his first and last line of defense. He isn't physically strong enough to take the same chances he used to in the Lightweight division. Now when he gets hit flush, sometimes he is stopped in his tracks. The only top fighter Mosley has looked good against since moving up in weight is Oscar De La Hoya. And that's because De La Hoya boxed Shane and moved away from him. A total contrast from the way Vernon Forrest, who took his Welterweight title, and Winky Wright, who took his Jr. Middleweight title, fought him. Forrest and Wright both took the fight to Mosley. By using their size and strength advantage they walked him down behind their long jabs.

In his last fight against Winky Wright, he lost a one sided decision. Shane had no answers for Wright's size and strength. Being unable to go through Wright physically, he seemed dead in the water. The one thing Mosley hasn't been successful doing throughout his career is adjusting and changing his attack. When Shane is confronted by fighters who were able to neutralize his speed with their size, he stops putting his punches together in combination, and looks for one big right to turn the fight around. If he had the right hand power of Thomas Hearn, that wouldn't be so bad. But he has the right hand power of Shane Mosley, and that's not enough. Against Wright, he got the worst of it when he tried to push the fight and attack, or when he stepped back and tried to box and counter.

When Mosley attempted to pressure Wright, he was greeted by the southpaw's jab and sneaky straight lefts on the way in. After eating some hard jabs along with an assortment of hooks and uppercuts, Mosley tried to change his tactic. Instead of trying to pressure Wright, in the hopes of overwhelming him with two and three punch flurries, Mosley tried to step back and make him miss, figuring he could counter and take advantage of his faster hands. Unfortunately for

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Mosley, Winky is a top pro and knows what he's doing in the ring.

Sensing Mosley's shift in strategy, Wright changed his. Realizing Mosley was fighting more measured and looking to box and counter, Wright pressured him more. With his chin down and hands held high, Wright took advantage of his size and strength and forced Mosley back. By Wright forcing the fight, Mosley couldn't box and counter. He either had to try and fight Winky off, or tie him up to force a break, enabling him to get away and reset. This strategy allowed Mosley to survive, but virtually killed any chances for him to win a decision. Against Winky Wright, Mosley is in a catch-22.

Because Wright has the longer reach, Mosley has to get inside. On the inside Mosley can be the most effective, while at the same time reducing Wright's chances of catching him with anything big. The problem is he can't get inside. He isn't strong enough to force Wright back, and he takes too many punches on the way in. On top of that, he doesn't have the power to keep Wright from coming at him. By going to Wright, he sets himself up to get caught with a big shot, and possibly stopped. And if he moves away and tries to box and counter, Wright just applies more pressure forcing him to fight or hold. By Wright forcing Mosley back and keeping him on his heels, he knows Mosley can't really hurt him. From a pure style vantage point, Wright holds every advantage.

The upcoming fight with Winky Wright is a must win for Shane Mosley. In Wright, he's facing a fighter who he doesn't match up with, and who is still very hungry. On top of that, Wright is fundamentally sound and loaded with confidence. After the way he controlled Mosley the last time, out boxing and out punching him, he'll be twice as hard to beat this time. And regardless of what anyone says, Mosley has to harbor some self doubt in the back of his mind. If Wright starts off quickly and dictates, it won't be long before Mosley thinks it's the 13th round of the first fight instead of the first round of the rematch.

The Jr. Middleweight division is currently very deep. Excluding his two fights with Oscar De La Hoya, Mosley is 0-3 against the best fighters he's fought since leaving the Lightweight division. If 0-3 becomes 0-4, Mosley will have some very tough decisions to make.