

## Division Open, but Doors Shut for Riddick Bowe

Written by Jake Donovan

Thursday, 21 October 2004 18:00

---

### ***Team Bowe battles outside the ropes to fight in between them***

When former undisputed heavyweight champion Riddick Bowe made the decision to return to the ring after an eight-year absence, he figured the likes of Vitali Klitschko, John Ruiz, Chris Byrd and James Toney would be his stiffest competition. Little did he know that his toughest fight in his second career would be the fight to convince everyone he is indeed fit to lace them up.

“Man, I’ve done taken every damn test they’ve asked me to take, yet the hateration still running rampant,” says Riddick, frustrated over the continued resistance met with his comeback. “I’ve never been banned before for health reasons, I only have one loss, yet I keep hearing about my past history. What history they looking at?”

The majority of the outrage on the part of Team Bowe stems from a recent article that was run on Secondsout.com last week (“Bowe 'world rating' raises fresh concern”, by Mark Butcher). In the article, it lists various reasons – most of which are opinions – as to why Riddick should not be allowed to embark on his comeback. Team Bowe believes that most of the comments made are the direct results of rumors being circulated around the industry, concerning statements that were allegedly made during his trial four years ago.

What has been heard is the fact that his lawyer at the time, Johnnie Cochran, attempted to have Bowe’s sentence reduced. The argument was that alleged damage suffered in the ring led Riddick to carry out the crime he had committed when he kidnapped his ex-wife Judy and their children back in 1998. What has been “suggested” is that Bowe testified under oath that he did indeed suffer from brain damage. A charge that Team Bowe vehemently denies – both verbally and in writing.

“Let’s clear this up right now,” explains advisor Jimmy Adams, “Riddick NEVER took the stand during his trial, and never said that he had brain damage. In any test he’s taken since then, there is no evidence in any of those tests to suggest that he has or has ever had brain damage. If he did, we wouldn’t even be talking about him today, other than his past achievements. I wouldn’t dare put him in the ring. But people don’t want to don’t want to read court transcripts or see medical test results. They just want to believe what they’ve heard and not bother investigating the situation.”

Minimal investigation will show that Bowe has passed every test he has been asked and required to take in order to obtain a boxing license anywhere in the country. Not only has he passed, but just about every doctor that he has seen since being released from prison this past May is amazed that the test results are that of a former fighter. For now, the plan is simply to get a license where Bowe plans to fight in the near future, though the exact date of his next fight is now no longer secure.

## Division Open, but Doors Shut for Riddick Bowe

Written by Jake Donovan

Thursday, 21 October 2004 18:00

---

Shortly following his second round stoppage of Marcus Rhode on September 25, Bowe announced on Boxingtalk.net his next six dates. The date of his next fight was originally to have taken place on October 23 in North Carolina. Within days, the date and location changed, as October 30 in Louisville became the new working date. Twice more the date would get pushed back until the aforementioned story on SecondsOut broke, which forced Straight Out Promotions to back out of the November 13 date (along with some other issues which stem from events surrounding the Danny Williams - Mike Tyson fight this past July). While Straight Out Promotions is unsure of when they will be able to reschedule (the proposed date for the moment in November 26), one thing they are sure of is that they are in the Riddick Bowe business.

“Once the Kentucky State Athletic Commission approved Riddick Bowe for a boxing license, I was more than happy to offer his team my support,” said Chris Webb, president of Straight Out Promotions. “I had heard plenty of rumors surrounding the health of Mr. Bowe, and had told Jimmy (Adams) up front that if any of it was true, I wanted no part of his comeback. Jimmy not only understood and agreed, but wholeheartedly shares my sentiments. But, every test he took came back clean, he showed in his last fight that with the exception of ring rust that he’s fit to fight, and I look forward to the day where we can officially stage his next fight.”

Team Bowe looks forward to the day where they can concentrate more on fighting inside the ring than outside the ropes.

“I am sick and tired with people insisting that something is wrong with my husband!” exclaims Riddick’s wife, Terri. “When he first got out of prison, all of these same people were promising us the world and couldn’t wait for Riddick to come back. Once he decided that he’s sticking with those who stuck by him, then all of a sudden these people disappear and the rumors start. What’s sickening is that people are believing them, and not the facts presented to them. But that’s OK, because I’m a fighter my damn self. I may not have the in-the-ring skills of my husband, but I can definitely take care of my own outside the ring, and those who want to slander my husband WILL pay. This, I promise.”

One of the biggest names on Team Bowe’s hit list was the main source of the SecondsOut article, Dr. Margaret Goodman of the Nevada State Athletic Commission. The way they see it is that Dr. Goodman is commenting from an opinion-based and prejudice standpoint. Opinion because she has yet to personally evaluate Bowe, and prejudice because they feel her mind was made up the moment he went to trial.

Dr. Goodman was kind enough to speak to **TheSweetScience.com** to defend her comments and once again offer her take.

“I have seen enough test results to know that, yes he does have a clean bill of health. I have never once disputed what any doctor has discovered. In fact, I am very happy that Mr. Bowe is a healthy man. I truly am. But as a doctor who does in fact understand the fight game, I can’t stress enough how quickly his signs of improvement can disappear so long as he continues to fight.

## Division Open, but Doors Shut for Riddick Bowe

Written by Jake Donovan

Thursday, 21 October 2004 18:00

---

“What most people fail to understand is that tests are not always the answer. At least not for boxing. If you look at the test requirement for most commissions, then you will know that just about anybody can pass them. I can take a test in most commissions and be granted a boxing license based on such results. As both a fight doctor and a fight fan, I choose to also take into consideration the fighter’s history, the declination – if any – in their skill level in their past few fights, his age, and so on. I do this by reviewing fight films, speech patterns, pathology reports... most doctors cannot make such an evaluation because they do not follow the game close enough, if at all. They’re asked to perform a test, and they do just that. The end result is fighters being licensed, regardless of what has occurred in the past.”

But the question that Team Bowe has is, what past?

“I keep hearing about his past history – what are these people talking about,” asks head trainer Richie Giachetti, who is also guiding the comeback of former heavyweight champion Oliver McCall. “The man has ONE damn loss, has never been knocked out, and has been away from the ring for eight years. Yet he’s heard in one goddamn post fight interview, and they decide that he’s punch drunk for life, that he has brain damage. Where is the proof? We’re showing proof that he’s fine. Where’s your proof that he’s not? Show me that, and I pack our bags right now. My reputation is on the line – I would NEVER support damaged goods. If the slightest thing was wrong with Riddick, if they found even a speck on his brain, I pat him on the back and tell him to find another career because it wouldn’t be worth it to go back into the ring. Show me proof.”

According to Goodman, we have already seen the proof in Bowe, and other past fighters.

“I mean, Meldrick Taylor is approved to fights in some states. Anyone who has heard him talk – and fight, for that matter – knows that he has no business in that ring. During and after the second fight with Golota, those who watched knew that Riddick was on the downside, that he was nowhere near the fighter he once was. I don’t understand why fans and commentators are able to watch a fighter and collectively say, “This fighter is shot. He needs to quit,” yet commissions cannot recognize the same warning signs. By not standing up and forcing the issue, we’re playing Russian roulette with the fighters’ lives.”

While Dr. Goodman’s medical opinion and passion for the sport is rightfully respected throughout the industry, other doctors have come forward to insist that all of the aforementioned has in fact been taken into consideration.

“I was made well aware of all the concerns surrounding Mr. Bowe,” said Dr. Winston Griner of Nashville, who was the first physician asked to evaluate Riddick upon his release from prison. “I performed a number of tests, reviewed the patient’s past medical history, and was also aware of his career inside the ring. What I was looking for was any evidence to show that he should never again step foot inside of a boxing ring. At the end of the series of tests, I came to the conclusion that he is actually healthier than I am.”

He is also a hell of a lot richer, which further makes Team Bowe wonder why this is all a get rich quick scheme.

## Division Open, but Doors Shut for Riddick Bowe

Written by Jake Donovan

Thursday, 21 October 2004 18:00

---

“We already have money,” says Terri Bowe. “It’s never been about the money. I’m a wife first, and a boxing fan second. I would never ever allow my husband to risk his life and our future for any dollar amount. I love him too damn much to let him do something as foolish as that if he weren’t fit to fight. There’s no amount in the world that could compensate for such a stupid risk. I’m not sure what more proof people need or want than what we’ve already offered and are willing to offer.”

For the moment, they apparently do not want in the ring proof. Though perhaps it is in fact what they need.