

Parting Ways

Written by Steve Kim
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What had been a hushed whisper, was made loud and clear today. Jack Mosley, would no longer be training his son, Shane. Ending a highly successful run that spanned over two decades, that includes a decorated amateur ledger and a professional career that is still in progress that has seen 'Sugar' Shane win championships in three weight classes.

By any standard, it was a highly successful team. Both father and son should one day look back on this union with good feelings. But as the father/trainer stumbled in the corner during his son's decisive 12-round loss to Winky Wright last weekend, it was clear, they had gone a long way together, but it's as far as they could go.

The names I'm hearing that are being considered to take over the training duties are Joe Goossen, Freddie Roach and John David Jackson. The first two, are highly respected veterans of the trade, Jackson, is a rising up-and-comer, who's work with Mosley in 2000, was instrumental in his first(and much more definitive) win over Oscar De La Hoya at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.

All three would be good choices, the question would be though, is it too late? Mosley is already 42 fights into his professional career and is 32 years old. Maybe, he is, what he's destined to be. On top of that were the hundreds of amateur fights that have added mileage to his odometer and the thousands of rounds of sparring that he has engaged in over the years. Physically, he looks fine- with or without the help of BALCO- but maybe he's like that car who's paint job still looks new but the engine still has over 500,000 miles on it.

But regardless, the time is right for a change. The reality is, Jack, like most fathers who train their sons, are limited, for several reasons.

One of them in my opinion is that most fathers, outside of training their own sons, really don't have that much experience training fighters as a whole. Think about it, of all the fathers that have trained their sons, how many of them outside of Tony Ayala Sr. and Felix Trinidad Sr. have really had any success outside their own gene pool?

Mosley, in the past had the opportunity to work with other fighters, most notably, heavyweight Clifford Etienne, with very limited success. Fathers, it seems, are only as good as their sons. If their sons are blue-chippers, they'll look very good for a period of time.

But here's the flipside, if their sons are premium fighters, the fathers are unaccustomed to dealing with adversity like other trainers who have fighters that don't always win or have it their way all the time. This was shown during Mosley's first loss to Vernon Forrest in January of 2002, when the elder Mosley seemed to freeze at the sight of his son really being in trouble for the first time in his career. Other trainers, have been there and done that.

When the tide turned quickly for Wright, the scene was repeated again. Mosley, didn't seem to

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offer much in terms of constructive instructions and even worse, seemed to have a poor grasp of even the most elementary of tasks like knowing what round it was.

Hey, anyone can look like Angelo Dundee if they have Muhammad Ali or Sugar Ray Leonard in the corner. Give me the experienced, steady hand that knows how to right the ship in rough waters. And speaking of the great Dundee, remember his words to Leonard in the late rounds against Hearns in 1981?

" You're blowing it kid, you're blowing it," he would tell a struggling Leonard in the late rounds."

Now, was that the only reason why Leonard was able to turn the tide against 'the Hit Man' on that warm September night? Of course not, Leonard was special, he did those types of things often. But it was Dundee's ability to see things the way they were and have the fortitude to tell his fighter something he may not have wanted to hear, that was invaluable.

Leonard was a Secretariat, but even a great thoroughbred needs an able jockey.

But perhaps Mosley, like most fathers that work their sons corner, didn't have the ability to tell his son the truth or perhaps even worse, have such a warped and prejudiced view to even know that they were in peril. The same love that drives them, is the same emotion that can keep someone from seeing things the way they really are.

Now, Mosley comes into the twilight of his career with another set of eyes overseeing things. For his sake, you hope that this change didn't come too late.