

Roy Jones Jr. Wants To Fight Tyson or Klitschko After That?

Written by Frank Lotierzo
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How does he follow up that showing with a fight versus one of the World's top Heavyweights? I'm talking about Roy Jones Jr. I can't believe that he really thinks he can fool the Boxing public by attempting to fight either Vitali Klitschko or Mike Tyson, in order to erase the left over stench from his last fight. If I didn't hear him say it, I would think that you can't even make it up. After the way Jones was devastated by Antonio Tarver, can he even remotely believe there is public interest in him fighting anyone other than Tarver again? Hey Roy, there's only one fighter that fans want to see you face, and he's not a Heavyweight. He's the only fighter that you have yet proven you're better than in two title fights and 14 rounds.

I cannot believe that Jones Jr. is not obsessed with getting Tarver back in the ring. This type of mindset is exactly what his critics have feasted on throughout his career. They've accused him of not taking tough fights and avoiding serious challengers. The fact that Jones Jr. has shown a trepidation to fight Tarver again indicates to me that he has some doubt as to whether or not he can defeat him. And believe me, fighting a Heavyweight will do nothing to subside those thoughts. Roy Jones Jr. should literally be consumed with getting his hands on Antonio Tarver again. Of course that's taking him at his word that he really just got caught and Tarver was lucky. Wonder if he really believes that deep down within?

Can anyone imagine Ali, Holyfield, Hagler, or Robinson being 1-1 in two fights with a rival, a cross state rival at that, and not wanting a piece of them again? I certainly can't. This is even more poignant concerning Jones Jr. for two reasons. First of all, in the first fight with Tarver, Jones Jr. won a very controversial decision. Although I think Jones Jr. pulled out the first fight, there are plenty who think he didn't. Secondly, Jones Jr. was knocked out in the rematch with one punch, I'd say advantage Tarver. I still find it hard to accept that Jones Jr. can walk away without going back at Tarver. If he can, this says a lot about him and his makeup.

Many past legendary Champs were consumed with and had to have at a former Nemesis who proved to be a stumbling block for them at some point during their career. The bottom line is if Jones Jr. never fights Tarver again, he will always have to answer questions about him and why he never proved that he could get a clean win over him. When you think about other past greats, how many of them were starched by one punch and didn't fight their conqueror again? Not too many. The burden of proof is strictly on Jones Jr. to prove he and Tarver are in the same league.

Another problem for Roy is that his career resume is somewhat sketchy regarding the caliber of opposition he has faced from top to bottom. Tarver represents his biggest challenge at Light Heavyweight. Remember, he fought Hopkins at 160 and Toney at 168. Other than Tarver, Jones Jr. hasn't really fought another Light Heavyweight who was anything special. Even though I don't think Tarver is a great Light Heavy, and feel recent past greats like Foster, Spinks, Saad, and Qawi would've defeated him, Jones Jr. doesn't own a legitimate win over him in the eyes of the Boxing public. As it stands now, a critic of Jones Jr. could say he is 0-2 versus the best Light Heavyweight he ever faced. Even if you think Jones Jr. edged Tarver out in the

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first fight, he didn't prove he was the better fighter.

The way it stands right now, Jones Jr. has faced adversity once in his career and he came up lame. Part of what makes a fighter an all time great and a legendary champion is how he handles adversity. Boxing history is replete with greats who came back and overcame a monumental setback and defeat. Roy Jones Jr. can't say that. And make no mistake, Jones Jr.'s legacy will take a severe hit if he doesn't at least fight Tarver again. Just by fighting him again will answer the question that some believe Tarver has his heart and that Jones Jr. wants no part of him. Just by fighting Tarver again will spare Jones Jr. from being labeled a coward by some. He doesn't even have to beat him, he just has to show that he is willing to go back in the ring with him.

Prior to fighting the rematch with Tarver, Jones Jr. was mentioned in the same vein as Robinson, Hagler, Ali, Louis, Duran, and Leonard. The difference is those greats were never KO'd by one punch. Even Duran ate several rights from Hearns before going out. And that was Hearns who did it at 154. On top of that, Hearns is one of the greatest punchers in Boxing history from 147-160, and Duran is best remembered for his seven year reign at 135. Jones Jr. was KO'd by Antonio Tarver who is not a legendary puncher at Light Heavyweight in anybody's opinion.

Sugar Ray Robinson was never KO'd in 202 fights, and he came back and beat fighters like Turpin, Basilio, Fullmer, and LaMotta convincingly after being defeated by them. Hagler was never stopped in almost 70 fights, and came back and proved he was the better fighter versus the fighters who either beat him or drew with him in their first fight. Fighters like Watts, Monroe, Seals, and Antuofermo. Muhammad Ali gave everybody a rematch whether they deserved it or not. Even Ken Norton, who he never really beat convincingly. The difference is that Ali was never stopped by Norton, and even the biggest Ali critic must admit, although Norton had Ali's number from a style standpoint, he certainly didn't have his heart. Jones at this time can't even whisper such a sentiment about Tarver.

Sugar Ray Leonard was never counted out and after he was mauled by Roberto Duran in their first fight, he was obsessed with fighting Duran again to even the score. Joe Louis was taken apart by Max Schmeling the first time they fought when he was stopped in the 12th round. In the interim after fighting Schmeling, Louis won the Heavyweight title and yet he didn't feel like he was the champ until he fought and defeated Schmeling. It is the way that these greats came back from adversity that cemented their legacy and greatness. As of this writing, Roy Jones Jr. is not part of that pristine club.

The way I see it, Jones Jr. has only one fight to take or he should retire. That is a third and deciding fight with Antonio Tarver. Forget Jones Jr. fighting Mike Tyson or Vitali Klitschko. He can't beat either of them, and I thought that way before he was stopped by Tarver. No, Jones Jr. has to prove that at the least he is on equal footing with Antonio Tarver. If he never fights him again, it will leave a big void in his legacy as far as I'm concerned.

To me, Jones Jr. has to prove that Tarver doesn't have his heart. Even if Jones Jr. fought Tarver again and lost a competitive fight, I would look at him in a more positive light. I would just

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figure that Tarver was to Jones Jr. what Norton was to Ali, or what Ted Lowry was to Marciano. That shouldn't tarnish all that he's accomplished throughout his career. However, if it's perceived that Tarver took his heart and Jones Jr. avoided him, well that's a totally different thing.

Roy Jones Jr. must fight Antonio Tarver again. It's the only fight out there for Jones Jr. that the public truly cares about.