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As a long time critic of Roy Jones, I finally started to accept that maybe I was missing it on him and he really is an all time great. Not until his one-sided decision over WBA Heavyweight Champ John Ruiz, and his hard fought victory over Antonio Tarver, did I totally give him his props as a great fighter. Just when I thought I had a handle on him, he gets knocked out by one punch and follows that up with a fight that doesn't make sense. This week it will be formally announced that Jones 49-2 (38) will fight IBF Light Heavyweight Champ Glencoffee Johnson 40-9-2 (27). The bout is scheduled for September 25th in Memphis, Tennessee.

This marks Jones' first fight since being knocked out by undisputed Light Heavyweight Champ, Antonio Tarver by one punch this past May 15th in their rematch. Johnson, who is 2-2-2 in his last 6 fights, won the vacant title with a unanimous decision over Clinton Woods on February 6th, 2004. This will be Johnson's first defense of the title. Johnson, a pro for almost 12 years is a workmanlike fighter who has faced some of the best fighters in the division. However, in his fights versus the best, he's come up short more times than not. Too bad Roy Jones has to come along and cherry pick the first world title belt Johnson has ever held.

Roy Jones is a fighter whose physical skill has never been questioned. A mere novice only has to see him once to conclude that he's a special fighter. The only question regarding Jones was how he'd handle adversity in the ring if ever confronted with it. I, for one, thought he answered that question in his first fight with Antonio Tarver. This was after questioning his character and toughness for the majority of his career.

In his first fight with Antonio Tarver, Jones was dehydrated and weak from making the 175 pound weight limit. Prior to fighting Tarver, Jones fought WBA Heavyweight Champ John Ruiz, winning a 12 round unanimous decision to capture the title. In preparing for Tarver, Jones had a hard time getting back down to 175 after weighing almost 200 for Ruiz. This took a lot out of him and hindered his performance in his first bout with Tarver. In the first Jones-Tarver bout, I had it even at 5 rounds apiece going into the 11th and 12th rounds. On my card, the fight was up for grabs and would come down to who wanted it more.

In those last two rounds Jones was spent and looked ready for the taking. However, Jones dug down deep and willed himself through the last two rounds and out hustled and out worked Tarver in winning a close decision. To me, Jones showed in those rounds that he had the heart that some, including myself, had questioned. It wasn't that he controlled Tarver or beat him up, it was more that he sensed the fight might be slipping away and pushed himself like he never had before, demonstrating the kind of heart and desire we expect in a great fighter. That being said, many felt that it was more a case of Tarver not closing the show and letting it slip away, more than Jones winning it. Although I can definitely see that as a possibility, I think Jones wanted it more and refused to let Tarver better him.

In the rematch six months later, Tarver starched Jones with one punch in the second round, taking his titles, along with some of the glow off his legacy. What I can't fathom is how Jones,

after all he has accomplished in boxing, isn't obsessed with fighting him again? Doesn't he realize that the rematch with Tarver may actually be what defines his career? Tarver is the only fighter that when the fight was over, the first one, Jones victory was questioned. In the rematch, it was assumed by most observers that a better prepared Jones would erase the left over stench from the first fight and handle Tarver, winning in a fashion that left no questions. Instead he was knocked out by the only clean punch Tarver landed in the fight.

Since Tarver's stunning knockout of Jones, everybody has yelled for a third fight, except Jones. Tarver has been mentioned as a possible opponent for James Toney, Mike Tyson, Vassiliy Jirov, and even Bernard Hopkins. Yet not a peep from Jones? That's not the mindset that many past greats adopted after suffering a humiliating defeat to one of their most bitter rivals. Could it be that Jones cares more about money and titles than the legacy he'll leave behind? The behavior and attitude exhibited by Roy Jones is starkly different than that of other past greats who suffered a significant defeat in their career.

Sugar Ray Robinson was consumed with fighting Randy Turpin again after he lost his title to him. In fact, Robinson rallied from behind to stop Turpin in their rematch. Joe Louis won the title shortly after being stopped by former champ, Max Schmeling in their first fight. Yet Louis said he never felt like the champ until he fought Schmeling and beat him in their rematch. Sugar Ray Leonard lost his undefeated record and WBC Welterweight title to Roberto Duran in their first fight. However, he was on the phone everyday with his lawyer/advisor Mike Trainer telling him to get him Duran again, which he did five months later. Muhammad Ali lost his undefeated record and was clearly beaten by Joe Frazier in their first fight, yet he was obsessed with fighting him again to prove he was the better fighter.

Evander Holyfield lost his undefeated record and title to Riddick Bowe in their first fight, but was hell bent on fighting him again. In the rematch a year later, Holyfield regained the title. Recently, Floyd Mayweather Jr. won a controversial decision over Jose Luis Castillo. Yet he had no qualms about giving him a rematch, in which he won convincingly, erasing all questions as to who was the better fighter. Incidentally, none of the above were knocked out by one punch by their opponent in defeat.

And Roy Jones? His goal seems to be just compiling alphabet titles. One would think that after having such a brilliant career, he'd more than want to prove that the only legitimate defeat of his career was a fluke. Whether he wants to accept it or not, the legacy of Roy Jones will be defined by what happens in the rubber match with Antonio Tarver, if it ever happens. If Roy Jones retired now, he would be more remembered for his knockout loss to Antonio Tarver than anything else. So I ask: why is he fighting Glen Johnson?