Written by Rick Folstad
Saturday, 19 February 2005 18:00

Let's have a show of hands. How many of you honestly believe WBA champ John "The Quietman" Ruiz is the "top guy in the heavyweight division," as he claims in a press release sent out Tuesday from his training camp?

I don't believe it either.

Another question: How many of you don't believe Ruiz actually said all those things he was quoted as saying?

Same number of hands.

If you didn't read it, the press release quotes Ruiz as saying "The toe-tag opponents I've been thrown have done nothing for my career. I want the toughest fighters out there, guys who have won titles and want to fight the best - me. If boxing was a marathon, we'd be at the halfway point and I'd have a five-mile lead on everybody else. I'm leading the field and nobody can catch me."

Reflective, with just a touch of sarcasm.

He goes on and on, but you get the idea.

This kind of thing could wreck Ruiz's status as The Quietman. If he keeps this up, he's going to have to change his nickname to something like "The Verboseman," or "The Longwindedman," or "The Ramblingman."

Of course, Ruiz might agree with what was written, but I don't believe he said it, not all of it anyway. I've got a feeling someone else wrote it (maybe Norman Stone?) and Ruiz just nodded a few times and said "sure Stoney, you can say I said that."

But it's not important who wrote it. What's important is that we finally heard something from the heavyweight division. Give credit to Ruiz' camp for doing something - for doing anything - to remind us there are some big guys out there who actually fight once in awhile.

For the last few weeks, the top of the heavyweight division has apparently gone into seclusion. It's not taking any calls and a "no visitors" sign has been posted on the door to the intensive care unit.

The only other heavyweight doing any serious politicking is James "Lights Out" Toney, but he's always a nagging voice in the background. Besides that, he's a relative newcomer to the division.

As far as what Ruiz and his camp claim in the press release, you have to kind of read it and

smile. Take it to work and share it with friends.

"Hey, you guys want to read something funny? Take a look at this."

In the release, Ruiz says he must be the top guy in the division because he's the "only heavyweight the other champions don't want to fight."

Maybe that's because the other champions don't want to put an entire fight crowd to sleep by the fourth round. Ruiz doesn't exactly pack the house.

I've sat down and talked to Ruiz and he seems like a nice, sincere guy who is tougher than a cold morning without coffee. But watching him fight is as exciting as watching grandma snore in her rocker. Give him a chance and Ruiz could destroy the heavyweight division out of pure boredom. He doesn't fight as much as he dances between clinches.

As for "toe-tag" opponents, Andrew Golota wasn't exactly dead meat when he dropped Ruiz twice in the early rounds of their fight this past November. Ruiz also states he'd like to see a heavyweight tournament formed to decide the real champ, and he looks forward to "fulfilling my mandatory obligation to the WBA, against James Toney or anybody else the WBA mandates, but it's not going to advance my career (because it wouldn't bring him another belt)."

A heavyweight tournament? A win over Toney wouldn't advance his career?

Wait a minute. Who wrote this thing? Don King?