I still keep in close touch with a few of the guys that I came up with in the amateur ranks. I was a graduate from the 1996 class which saw a group of talented guys enter the professional ranks. I have been fortunate enough to have the last Olympic gold medal winner of the 20th century as a personal friend. On paper, junior middleweight David Reid of Philadelphia had a better amateur career than Floyd Mayweather, Antonio Tarver, Fernando Vargas and Zab Judah. But also on paper, despite his WBA title, Dave had the worst professional career of the group.

Dave's career came and went, yet I don't think it was all that bad. He made his professional debut on HBO, which just didn't happen to boxers in the '90s. He was a millionaire, due to the huge signing bonus from America Presents, before he had his first professional bout. He captured a world championship after only eleven bouts without having to face a true killer. He was even placed in a win-win situation when he signed to fight Felix Trinidad in 2000. I say win-win because he cleared seven figures for the bout and, had he won, he would have been just as big as Oscar De La Hoya. With a loss (which was the end result), it was a case of a young man who wasn't expected to win against the more experience puncher.

Everyone can look at the situation now and play Monday morning quarterback, but the fact of the matter is this: they always say how boxers should step up to challenges to prove how great they can be, but when it happens, those same people yell about what a mistake it was. I was with Dave in Las Vegas before the Trinidad fight and 80% of the people I spoke with felt that Dave was going to win. Afterwards those same people spoke about how they knew he wasn't ready for that type of bout so early in his career.

With that being said, Dave's professional career was short-lived after the Trinidad bout. There were a lot of distractions in his way that may have caused some mental obstacles for him. His co-trainers Fred Jenkins and Al Mitchell were not seeing eye to eye. His promotional firm, America Presents, was about to fold. And Dave just was not enjoying himself too much any more. It's easy for an outsider to say that a boxer should or shouldn't react a certain way to things, but if you'd never lived it, then you couldn't feel it.

Dave was able to quietly leave the sport with some satisfaction. He stayed in Philly for a couple of years, relaxing and enjoying his family life. I remember going down to Philly for the all-star festivities and staying at his mini-mansion. But soon it became natural for him to get bored without participating in his true love. The one thing that stood in his way of a comeback was his droopy eyelid that he had surgery on a few times. His eyelid would hang low, impairing his vision when it was exposed to heavy fighting. He would rekindle his relationship with longtime trainer Al Mitchell, who was the director of the United States Olympic College Boxing Program at Marquette in Michigan. Al invited Dave to the school to take some courses and to help train boxers in the program.

Comparing Philly to Marquette is like comparing summer to winter, so I can see why there was

some hesitation on his part. But his future was more important to him than his comfort level, so off he went. It took some time to settle in and adjust, but now, along with another former amateur standout, Larry Nicholson, Dave is an important piece to Marquette's successful boxing program. I did a previous article and mentioned Dave Reid, so I figured it would only be right to give him a call and get some quotes from him. But to my surprise, I was laying in bed on Easter Sunday when my phone rang with Dave on the other end.

We spoke for about 45 minutes, really just catching up on our lives. But we did speak briefly about boxing. Dave does not like to compare his career with the other peers of his 1996 class. He credits his accomplishments with being around guys like Tarver and Floyd on a daily basis. He says that they all motivated one another by what they accomplished in the amateurs. He feels that he won over a lot of fans from the Trinidad bout and he is grateful. He makes no excuses for his final ring record, but he wants the readers to know that it was extremely difficult mentally coming off the first professional loss because of the outside pressures. He looks up to Oscar De La Hoya as an inspiration for what he has accomplished in boxing.

Dave also would like to inform all young boxers to take notes, pay attention to the sport, and learn as much as you can. He still watches professional bouts with interest, although he has no personal favorites. His love and knowledge is with the Marquette boxing programs and all the guys who attend. I tried to get him to say a few choice words in closing to the readers but he refused, saying that he is an average guy now and is no longer active, so there is no need to try to relive the glory days with interviews.

I tried to get more out of him, but Dave really just wants to be a regular human being. He was never too comfortable in the spotlight. I guess that's why God gave him his and got him out quick. He is not the type to dwell and speak about what could have been. I guess those questions can be left to the critics and experts. Dave Reid should be admired for his attitude and his current life. He is not bitter and he enjoyed the ride like every athlete should. Everyone should applaud and greet him for the class he has shown and accomplishments he achieved. For him, boxing was just a sport and not his life.