

James Toney Talks to The Sweet Science

Written by Brian Adams
Monday, 16 May 2005 19:00

I personally don't admire the skills of most boxers, but there are a few who have my respect. Pernell Whitaker, Michael Carbajal, Tommy Hearns and James Toney are a handful of guys who meet that criterion. I used to watch tapes of those champs and be in amazement. With the exception of Michael Carbajal, I actually have the privilege of knowing all the legends I mentioned. Through my newfound close relationship with a guy who made history by becoming only the third middleweight champion in history to win the heavyweight crown, I am able to get his version of the steroid scandal to the public. I know Michael Buffer has said this already, but here is "The New WBA Heavyweight Champion of the World, James 'Lights Out' Toney . . ."

When I learned that I would be getting a crack at John Ruiz and the heavyweight title, I was excited as hell. I wanted the bout sooner rather than later. I got the call in March right after the Vitali Klitschko and Hasim Rahman bout fell out for the tenth time. I usually train eleven weeks for a bout, but for the Ruiz bout I only had 3½ weeks to prepare. Of those 3½ weeks, one week was used solely for my cardio program. I sparred about thirty rounds, as opposed to my normal 200 rounds of sparring.

I was prepared for the mulling type fight Ruiz likes, but it turned out to be an easy night. It became so easy for me that I was just enjoying myself and having fun, and when that happens, boxing is easy for me. I think Ruiz was expecting me to run from him, but pain is a friend of mine and I love to fight. I feel that the body shots were hurting Ruiz a lot. When Buffer announced the decision and I heard those words "The New" - it was a fantastic feeling. I captured the sport's prize gold. I captured the same thing Muhammad Ali and Joe Louis once had. I did something that no one else projected. Now they want to take it away from me because of a bogus steroid claim.

I got a call on Monday (5/9/05) from my promoter Dan Goossen, telling me that I failed the post-fight drug test. I thought it was a joke at first. I don't even like needles, nonetheless drugs. I thought my results were switched or something. I was taking a prescribed medication for the biceps and triceps surgery I had late last year.

I tore my muscles in a bout with Rydell Booker on September 23rd and I had surgery on September 25th. I remained in a cast for four months, which is unusual. I got the cast removed in January and really didn't have the proper time for therapy. I started taking the prescribed medicine shortly after the surgery to help with the recovery time on the muscle and to reduce the inflammation. My doctor has confirmed this, but yet they want to put me through this bulls*** and say that I cheated. I did nothing wrong and I wouldn't want my kids or my true fans to think that I have to cheat in life to get ahead. I can't thoroughly explain what was the exact medication that was given to me because I am not a doctor. But I was willing to take whatever was given to help with the recovery. Besides, the prescription did not enable me to beat John Ruiz; it just allowed me to recover from a possible career-ending surgery. My precise counterpunching was the reason I won. Not being able to immediately answer questions on the medical level is the reason why I hadn't spoken to any media people when I first heard about this. I was floored

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when Dan told me.

Now the New York State Athletic Commission and probably the WBA want to penalize me for putting my body through hell those 3½ weeks of training without taking any performance enhancing substances. They may want to strip me of my title, but my team and I refuse to let it happen without my fans hearing from me. I have not yet filed my appeal with the NYSAC and will wait to hear back from my attorney on the determination. No matter what the outcome is, I will still be the People's Champion. Dan Goossen is optimistic like I am. Dan is not only the best promoter today, but he is also a true rider. Dan does what he has to do to allow his boxers to succeed. I'm still expecting to remain champion and I feel that there may be a rematch with John Ruiz. I'm prepared to fight anyone, anywhere, anytime. I was in good shape - not great shape, but good - for those 3½ weeks. Now imagine what I could do to Ruiz with the proper amount of time.

NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, I KNOW I DIDN'T CHEAT OR TAKE ANY ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES WHILE PREPARING FOR THIS FIGHT. MY GOAL HASN'T CHANGED EITHER. I WANT KLITSCHKO, BYRD AND THE WINNER OF GOLOTA-BREWSTER.

I just want the world to know that James Toney appreciates all the love and support that I received FROM EVERYONE. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you all (even Roy Jones). Boxing certainly has the greatest fans, because it is the greatest sport. I want everyone out there to keep his or her head up, because I will always keep mine up. Please keep in mind when the topic of steroids and drugs surface in the sport, James Toney states there is no need AND HAS NEVER BEEN A NEED for me to indulge at all IN ANY ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES TO HELP ME BEAT ANYBODY.