

The Jermain Taylor Fan Club

Written by Rick Folstad
Thursday, 21 July 2005 19:00

Friends and family gathered around the telephone Wednesday afternoon to pay homage to Jermain Taylor, the new middleweight champion of the world.

At least that's what Wednesday's national media conference call with Taylor and his promoter, Lou DiBella, sounded like.

It wasn't exactly a lesson in Journalism 102. Several callers sounded more like members of the Jermain Taylor fan club than working journalists, telling us how they scored the fight in Taylor's favor and how happy they were for the new champ. When one guy did ask a legitimate question about the low punch stats turned in by Taylor, DiBella quickly dismissed it with an obscenity.

It was fun.

The best thing about the conference call was Taylor. A class act, he was respectful and polite, and he did his best not to mutter "aw shucks" as the rave reviews kept pouring in. He called everyone "sir," and he didn't start badmouthing Bernard Hopkins' dirty fight tactics until he was pushed into it.

"I learned a lot in that fight," Taylor said of his split decision win over Hopkins Saturday night at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. "I was rushing too much and I was throwing wild punches. It got to the point where all that was on my mind was, 'I've got to win this fight. I've got to do whatever it takes to win.'

"(Hopkins) is a great fighter, but he did a lot of dirty things, like hit me below the belt. But I tried to keep my cool. If there's a rematch, I'll fight a lot better. I'm going to be a lot more relaxed. I just see a lot more things I can do."

Right now, the rematch wouldn't happen before December. Because of a gash in Taylor's scalp caused by an accidental headbutt, he's on a 45-day suspension. That means roadwork, but no contact drills.

While Taylor started strong in the fight, he faded down the home stretch, blaming his fatigue on nerves and the busy early rounds when he kept pushing Hopkins.

"I did get a little winded those later rounds," he said. "I was nervous, or just overanxious to hit him. The next fight won't be that close."

"He wasted a lot of energy chasing Hopkins in those early rounds," DiBella said. "But I don't think it will go 12 rounds the next time."

While the celebration – oops, the conference call – was in full swing, DiBella suddenly announced that Hopkins was, at that very moment, filing an appeal with the Nevada Athletic

The Jermain Taylor Fan Club

Written by Rick Folstad
Thursday, 21 July 2005 19:00

Commission over the judging of the fight.

DiBella rightfully questioned why Hopkins couldn't just let it go, accept the loss like a man. He didn't try to hide how disgusted he was with Hopkins.

"This just shows you what a lowlife, low grade he is," DiBella said. "He's still the sore loser he has always been. The guy is a great fighter, as much as I don't like him. But I'm proud of Jermain and this is Jermain's moment. But I'm happy to be one up on that bastard. Yeah, I am."