

Is Calzaghe looking for a way out of Lacy unification?

Written by JE Grant
Monday, 15 August 2005 19:00

As I suspected would be the case following the Jeff Lacy win over Robin Reid – [in writing](#) – Joe Calzaghe is now, according to a report published by the BBC, [having second thoughts](#) about meeting the rising star Lacy in what was supposed to be Calzaghe's long-awaited, career-defining unification fight.

Lacy, you see, crunched the formerly "steel-chinned" Robin Reid in Florida last week. Lacy, is now 20-0 (1 NC) (16 KOs). No one had ever [put Reid on the deck](#) in his 43 fights, including a title go with Calzaghe.

The setting for a Calzaghe-Lacy showdown seemed in place. If Lacy could somehow get past Reid (and isn't it humorous now to see Reid being labeled as shot, when before the bout many made it out to seem as if Lacy might be in real trouble?), he would face Calzaghe.

Even after Lacy blew out Reid, Frank Warren, Calzaghe's promoter, put on a brave public face.

"Jeff Lacy, 20-0, is a great fighter, and he looked impressive against Robin Reid last week a seventh-round TKO victory in Tampa," [he told TBO.com](#) in an article published online August 11th. "I promoted Jeff on cards he's done over here before, and I'm very familiar with him. He just has to realize Joe Calzaghe is not Robin Reid."

Writing in the *South Wales Argus*, however, Calzaghe seems to be laying the groundwork for a negotiations debacle that will scotch the showdown with Lacy.

Perhaps it could be a money problem.

"He wants it and I want it and indeed the prospect really excites me, but I haven't even talked money yet so nothing is cut and dried," he wrote.

But of course there is also the injury way out.

"Lots of things can also happen between now and then to upset the applecart, not least among them injuries, and I am a little bit injury prone nowadays," Calzaghe added in the *Argus* column. "I have had problems with my hand and back on and off over the years, which is hardly surprising when you have been fighting since the age of nine like I have. There's bound to be some wear and tear."

To compound his public relations problem, Calzaghe wants to fight a September tune-up and [talk has turned to Kenya's Evans Ashira](#) or Manny Siaca ostensibly as a WBO title defense.

Evans, who has never fought at super-middleweight, is [not ranked by the WBO](#), but that of

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course should prove no obstacle.

Siaca is 1-4 in title matches, most recently losing to Mikkel Kessler in Denmark (Nov. 12, 2004 – KO 8).

In Calzaghe's last defense [he faced Mario Veit](#), a fighter he had previously knocked out in one round in a title bout.

He was scheduled to face Brian Magee, but, as a willing victim of a WBO edict, he cancelled the match in order to continue on a path to the "mandatory" defense against Veit.

He did this even after watching light-heavyweights [Antonio Tarver and Glen Johnson toss out their alphabet belts](#) in order to fight the best fighters in their division – and make more money doing so.

Indeed Tarver, viewed by the public and boxing world as the true champion, will defend the very obscure IBO title [when he meets Roy Jones](#) in their upcoming rematch, and no one is really interested in the name of the belt in question.

By remaining wed to his WBO belt Calzaghe has not made a concerted effort to attract the attention of any of the big names in the sport, leaving it to the collective imagination of the boxing public as to his true motive.

The image of Calzaghe as someone who is unwilling to meet the top fighters is fast becoming etched in stone. Since gaining the vacant WBO belt against faded British star Chris Eubank (Oct. 10, 1997) he has gone on to defend his title 16 times.

He did indeed defend against a steady though faded former belt-holder Charles Brewer (Apr. 20, 2002 – W12) and he knocked out former titlist Byron Mitchell (Jun. 28, 2003 – KO 2). Mitchell lost his last fight prior to meeting Calzaghe to IBF/WBA titlist Sven Ottke.

Both wins were good victories against fairly solid opposition.

His defenses have also included some above average fighters in Omar Sheika (Aug. 12, 2000 – KO 5), and, as mentioned, the former WBC (and numerous other alphabet titles) titlist Robin Reid (Feb. 13, 1999 – W12).

It's the names that are missing from his record that is more indicative of how this 32-year-old fighter, who is the longest reigning current titlist, and has a record that stands at 39-0, [is being defined](#) by much of the boxing world.

During Calzaghe's WBO reign, Roy Jones, Bernard Hopkins, Felix Trinidad, Sven Ottke and [Glen Johnson](#) have all been mentioned as possible foes. Whether it was contract negotiation breakdowns, injuries, or the stars not aligning, none of those fights ever came to fruition.

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His fault, their fault, or nobody's fault, Calzaghe, an undefeated titlist with a sizeable following in his homeland, couldn't coax [a big name into the ring](#) with him. It just makes one scratch his head.

By all accounts, Calzaghe is a talented and able fighter. But it is more than unfortunate that he remains known primarily by boxing insiders. He could be in the land of the giant purses with just a few wise career moves.

In fact, for his recent title defense against Veit [he made more than 700,000 British pounds](#)

While that is a sizeable purse for anyone, it stands in sharp contrast to the course taken by another good-looking and talented fighter by the name of Oscar De La Hoya – [a man who has amassed a sizeable fortune despite losing occasionally](#)

Oscar regularly risked his titles and his status by climbing the next higher mountain. While it did not always result in achieving the peak, it did payoff handsomely.

Instead of talking about filling arenas, boxing scribes should be marveling at the number of pay-per-views buys Calzaghe pulled in.

Even the less-than-promoter-friendly [Bernard Hopkins has reaped multi-million dollar paydays](#) and he did it by fighting "name" fighters such as Trinidad and De La Hoya.

In his *Argus* column Calzaghe claims to want the fight with Lacy.

"Don't get me wrong, the Lacy fight will go ahead ..." The proof will be seeing him in the ring with the young puncher.