

## **In Boxing News: Rahman and Toney Rock Around the Clock**

In anticipation of tonight's fight between WBC champ **Hasim "The Rock" Rahman** and his challenger

**James "Lights Out" Toney**

live from Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City (HBO), members of the boxing press are weighing in on this heavy matter.

Batting cleanup for *The Sweet Science*, the illustrious **Mike Katz** brings us some fond remembrances in a series of snapshots of, in addition to

**Bob Arum**

,  
**Eddie Futch**

,  
**Mike McCallum**

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**Thell Torrence**

,  
**David Tua**

,  
**Dave Tiberi**

,  
**Monte Barrett**

and

**Vitali Klitschko**

, the time James Toney threw a chair at the writer during the post-fight press conference.

["For a former high school quarterback," writes Katz, "he \(Toney\) showed why he went into boxing."](#)

Others on Team TSS who have something singular to say about tonight's fight are

[Eddie Goldman](#)

,  
[Patrick Kehoe](#)

,  
[Aaron Tallent](#)

and

[Michael "Woodsy" Woods](#)

.  
**Tim Graham**

, president of the Boxing Writers Association of America and one of the fight game's great chroniclers, in the

*The Buffalo News*

bemoans the current state of the heavyweight division. He compares

Written by Robert Ecksel

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### [Rahman and Toney](#)

to some of their predecessors in boxing's marquee division, men named **John L. Sullivan**

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**Joe Louis**

,  
**Rocky Marciano**

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**Muhammad Ali**

,  
**George Foreman**

and

**Mike Tyson**

, and finds the big boys of today sorely lacking. Still, "There is an opportunity," HBO boxing analyst

**Larry Merchant**

said. "It probably is the most significant fight between American heavyweights in some time. The winner will have public support as the top fighter. It's an important fight as they try to sort out the recycled heavyweights." Sorting out the heavyweight mess is something we all desire, fight fan and fighter alike. "The problem is," Rahman said, "in the older days the best used to fight the best. Now I agree there was a lot more good people at the top, but the best used to fight the best and that's where the big fights and the trilogies and the marquee moments came. Superstars were born when the best fight the best." Toney couldn't agree more: "My thing is fighting the best damn boys out there who the public and the press want to see me fight. I'm fighting Hasim Rahman. He's the best within the division right now, so I'm fighting him." No one covers Rahman better than his homeboy

**Lem Satterfield**

at the

*Baltimore Sun*

. He writes that

### [Rock's last four fights have varied from bizarre to exciting to boring](#)

, and reminds us just how erratic, how disappointing, a career it has been. But as Rahman, who thinks he's fighting a fat man, reminds us, "I haven't ducked out on anything in preparing for this fight. No matter what James Toney does, I'm going to make this fight. I'm not just relying on power; my conditioning is excellent. I'm going to let my hands go. The public will see an exciting heavyweight fight." That fits into Toney's plans exactly. "I've heard it all about my weight. The last time I got my [butt] whupped was by a doctor 37 years ago. If I'm baldheaded, fat and out of shape, why am I beating up all of these top heavyweights? I'm fighting Hasim Rahman, who is the best heavyweight out there. I'm going to destroy him. I'm going to knock Hasim Rahman out. I'm the best fighter in the world, pound for pound, and the only way to prove it is to fight a guy wearing a belt."

**Steve Bunce**

in

*The Independent*

writes an eloquent appreciation of Lights Out. "When boxing people talk of the good old days," writes Bunce, "they ignore the presence of James Toney, whose career

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resembles that of the great fighters of old,â€? words that are music to Toneyâ€™s ears. â€œ [Man, Iâ€™m the most old school of all the old school fighters.](#)

I'm not just a throwback; I have redefined the term â€˜throwback.â€™ But the difference between throwback and blowback are just a few letters. â€œI have to be the worst advertisement in the world for steroids,â€? Toney said as he stood up and raised his shirt. â€œLewis, Klitschko, Holyfield, Tyson and Rahman are all big dudes. They are big dudes but they canâ€™t fight.â€?

### **Ron Borges**

in the

*Boston Globe*

writes that

[Rahman is fighting not just James Toney Saturday night; heâ€™s also fighting his demons](#)

. â€œI accept what Iâ€™ve done,â€? Rock said. â€œI take responsibility for whatever Iâ€™ve done. I know my history and I wonâ€™t repeat my history and the negative things Iâ€™ve done. I really feel like Iâ€™m in the best shape that I can be in. Weâ€™re going to be right, ripped, ready, and strong. Iâ€™m ready to fight.â€? That may be, but, as Borges writes, â€œBut now [Toneyâ€™s] back fully believing his slickness on the inside and his heart and defensive skills will baffle, bewilder, and ultimately break down Rahman.â€? Looks like tonight is the night â€¦

*The Hartford Courant*

brings us good news out of Connecticut that efforts are underway to change the name of Front Street to

[â€œWillie Pep Boulevard.â€?](#)

Pep, a two-time featherweight world champ in the 1940s and 1950s, is considered one of the greatest prizefighters in history, and grew up on Front Street. Renaming a street in the boxerâ€™s honor has been a strictly from the bottom up effort, but the politicians have heard the call and now lead the charge. House Speaker

### **James Amann**

said Friday he plans to include the proposal for a name change in part of a major transportation bill. â€œThe reason is simple,â€? he said. â€œThe guy (Pep) is not only a Hartford legend, but a legend in the boxing world. It would be a great honor for him and something Hartford should do for the guy. Heâ€™s one of the people that made Hartford and made our state a great state.â€? No word yet if there will be any speed limit on Willie Pep Boulevard.

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