

Sleepy Time with Toney and Rahman

Written by Rick Folstad
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The heavyweight division didn't exactly rise up from the ashes Saturday night.

It more or less stirred a finger or two, yawned, blinked a couple times and quietly fell back to sleep.

So did the rest of us.

Z-z-z-z-z-z-z.

James Toney and Hasim Rahman put on an OK heavyweight fight, but it wasn't the barnstormer some of us were hoping for or expecting. It won't secure a storied place in the annals of heavyweight boxing lore.

No one will remember this fight a year from now when the topic of conversation turns to "greatest heavyweight fights I have seen. Recently."

Maybe if someone had been knocked out. Maybe if someone had dished out a beating. Maybe if they'd gone toe-to-toe for 12 rounds.

Maybe if someone had won.

But instead, both fighters went home with a majority draw, which left us feeling empty, like maybe we missed something, like we got to the movie theater too late and never learned the plot, never learned who the real bad guy was.

All we could do is watch and see what happens.

With the majority draw, Rahman keeps his WBC title belt, which is probably a pretty good thing. The belt appeared to be a few buckle holes too short to circumvent Toney's mid-section.

Toney came in at an all-time high of 237 pounds, which, at 5-foot-9, puts him up there in the fat line. I'd like to say he carries those extra 30 pounds well, but he doesn't.

The word "Buddha" kept popping into my head.

As for Toney's overall look, I didn't know they made trunks that big. At times, it looked like they were losing their grip around his belly, struggling to avoid falling in a pile down around his ankles. But they stayed up, and America's fight fans were spared the trauma of what could have been a very ugly incident.

It could have been worse. He could have worn something tight.

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Still, if you watched closely, you could see flashes of the old Toney, the guy who used to pick off punches, slip and move and come back with teeth rattling punches of his own.

But then there were those times when he'd wind up and throw one of those pool-room roundhouses.

Overall, Toney showed us that aside from an eating problem, he can still fight. If he'd just had something left for the 12th round, he would have been the new WBC heavyweight champ.

But he didn't, and Rahman kept the belt despite never winning the title in the ring.

If there was a loser Saturday night, it wasn't Toney or Rahman.

It was the heavyweight division.