

No More Waiting for Travis Simms

Written by Robert Ecksel

Tuesday, 02 January 2007 19:00

On the undercard the Sam Peter/James Toney Jan. 6 heavyweight rematch from the Seminole Hard Rock in Miami, Fla. (SHOWTIME), WBA super welterweight champion Jose Rivera (38-4-1, 23 KOs) defends against the WBA super welterweight champion “in recess,” Travis Simms (24-0, 18 KOs), for the title, the belt, the crown Simms thinks is his.

Travis Simms Jr. and his identical twin brother Tarvis were born in Norwalk, Conn. on May 1, 1971, to a boxing family. “My father fought, my grandfather, my great grandfather, my great great grandfather—they all boxed,” Simms told TSS. “It’s always been part of my life.”

Travis and Tarvis Simms were first taught how to fight by their father.

“My dad showed us how to fight, how to stand, from day one,” said Simms. “He showed us how to hit the speed bags, etcetera. So I had a great, great experience in boxing and a great teacher to start me off, which was my father.”

When father Simms finally brought the twins, who were five at the time, to the gym to continue their education, he introduced them to the trainer John Harris, who is Travis Simms’ mentor to this day.

“We were very excited,” recalled Simms about that first day in the gym. “We were very eager to get into the ring and start fighting right away. But my trainer was very disciplined and he wanted to make sure we knew exactly what we were doing before we got into the ring. Once he seen that we knew what we were doing he didn’t hesitate to put us in there,” Simms said. “So I’ve been in the ring ever since.”

Although Simms played baseball, basketball, football and golf while growing up, boxing was in his blood. He had a sterling amateur career, hundreds of fights, and won a slew of tournaments and titles.

Travis Simms turned pro on Feb. 10, 1998, with a third round TKO over Michael Brown in Baton Rouge. Simms reeled off 22 straight wins before claiming the vacant NABA 154-pound title on Nov. 1, 2002, in Louisville, Ky. with a victory over Anton Robinson. Simms signed with Don King and got his first shot at a world title on Dec. 13, 2003, at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City, where Simms scored a TKO5 over then-undefeated WBA super welterweight champion, Alejandro “Terra” Garcia.

“I’ve got to thank Don King for giving me the opportunity. I not only won, I looked very impressive,” Simms said after the bout. “I served notice on the super welterweight division.”

In Simms’ next fight he was granted a voluntary successful defense against former WBO super welterweight champ Bronco McKart at Madison Square Garden on Oct. 2, 2004.

No More Waiting for Travis Simms

Written by Robert Ecksel

Tuesday, 02 January 2007 19:00

“I think I boxed brilliantly against McKart,” said Simms. “I was on top of the boxing world and looked forward to some exciting matches.”

But exciting matches were down the road a bit, like two years down the road a bit, a long time to be on the shelf for any athlete, but especially for a boxer in his prime, so I asked Simms what happened and why the long delay.

“It’s a strange scenario,” he said from his training camp in Georgia. “I’m the original WBA champion to begin with. I never lost my title in the ring. But what happened was when I won the world title (from Garcia on Dec. 2, 2003), I was mandatory to fight the winner of Shane Mosley and Winky Wright for the super championship in the super welterweight division.

“However, the WBA decided not to enforce my mandatory and the contract I had with them to fight the winner, and after a year of begging and pleading for them to enforce my mandatory, my contract, I filed a lawsuit against them in federal court in New York. So they tried to legally strip me of my world title because of my prior litigation against them.”

Simms filed his lawsuit in 2004 and was stripped of his title the following year. The suit was settled out of court and the WBA reinstated Simms as champion “in recess” in August 2006.

“They let Garcia fight an elimination bout to be my mandatory a year after defeating him,” continued Simms. “So instead of them enforcing my mandatory with Winky Wright, they tried to enforce a mandate with Garcia, a guy I just knocked out and won a title from. So why would you try to enforce me to fight him when I have a mandatory from you to fight Winky Wright, which is a much bigger fight, a much bigger payday?”

“With that said, they upgraded Garcia to the position of champion the week of his fight with Rivera and that’s how this whole dilemma came along, with Jose Rivera being now the current champion, while I’m the champion in recess.”

It sounds pretty confusing, to say the least, but since confusion is the coin of the realm, buddy, can you spare a dime?

“It’s a very fishy situation right now with Rivera being considered the champion to begin with,” said Simms, “because he lost his 147-pound world title to my stablemate Luis Collazo. He loses his title and doesn’t fight for nine months, but then he comes back to boxing and says ‘I’m gonna come back, but I’m gonna fight at 154’—against Alejandro Garcia for my world title.

“So the way I look at it is we’re both looking for a crack at my world title. If the WBA wants to come along and give me a mandatory to fight for my title, so be it. I welcome that challenge.”