

## Toney To Go Out On Own Terms-Pt. II

Written by Ronan Keenan  
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Following so many recent setbacks, could Toney's apparently slothful approach to training make him Goossen's biggest disappointment since Michael Nunn?

Well, Toney and Goossen aren't resigning to that fact just yet, with "Lights Out" looking to retune his skills in an untelevised showdown against Danny Batchelder, 25-4-1 (12), on May 24th in San Jose.

And the duo is as optimistic as ever.

"I'm rested and ready to fight anyone, anytime and anywhere," claimed Toney. "I promise you will see the best heavyweight in the world on May 24th. I come to fight. You won't see me dancing. Hell no, I'm coming for the knockout. I am more determined than ever."

Added Goossen: "Toney came back and said it was the first time in three years that everything was clicking at 100 percent.

"In other words, his Achilles, the arm, the conditioning, he's feeling 100 per cent. As they say, better late than never. As much as I wish this would have been the case years ago, it is what it is. But he looks fantastic."

And the promoter has even sent out a press release with comments attributed to a physician stating: "James is in excellent health and shape. The results of this examination exceeded my expectations. He seems to have kept the weight off from his last fight and continued on a healthy diet and training regime"

So could this be a new dawn in Toney's 69-6-3 (43) nineteen year professional career?

"Even as an overweight, fading version of his former self, James Toney still could beat a lot of what we consider 'good' heavyweights," says Don Stewart of the Reading Eagle. "I think he's still a top-10 heavy. So I don't fault him for sticking around at 38, but I think he'd serve himself best by getting back down to cruiserweight and making his final run there. That might not be realistic anymore, given his eating issues."

Given his current form, Toney can't afford to slip-up against the relatively obscure Batchelder, who campaigned at 175 pounds only three years ago.

"If he struggles against Batchelder, I think my opinion changes quite a bit," added Stewart. "It's very important that he look good in that fight from a physical standpoint and a performance standpoint. If he struggles, I think it's time to hang 'em up."

But if Toney does indeed retire after his next bout, how will his venture into the heavyweight ranks be remembered?

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“I think Toney's career at heavyweight possesses a ‘could-have-been’ element because of how sensational he looked in his first outing against Evander Holyfield,” reckons boxing historian Lee Groves. “It is a tribute to Toney’s boxing acumen that he has been able to compete with far larger men at this advanced age.

“If one wants to take the negative approach, it can be said that Toney's success is a commentary on the state of the heavyweight division. I don't think there's any doubt about whether Toney is a Hall of Famer. I think he cinched his place with the victories over Jirov and Holyfield.”

Still, even with a place in Canastota secured, it will probably be a long time before Toney's defiant nature allows him to end the quest for that golden Goose.