

Who Will Pay To See Roy Jones On Saturday?

Written by Michael Woods
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You must hand it to Roy Jones, and the promoters of his Saturday fight with Tony Hanshaw: they have worked almost every promotional angle, short of attempting the "Vargas Snap," to hype up the PPV offering.

Will it work? What do you think? Have you considered paying \$30 to see what Jones has left, when you could delve into an almost free tripleheader of fairly intriguing fare on HBO?

I don't frankly see more than about 40,000 hardcore Roy fans ponying up to see the Jones/Hanshaw card (which also features Oscar Diaz and Smoke Gainer in semi-tough scraps), but fight fans are loyal lot. That is why we have a situation like this one, where the main broadcast players aren't sufficiently compelled with Jones/Hanshaw to put up a decent stake, and event organizers are "forced" to go the PPV route.

This one is a headscratcher of major proportions, though. HBO, I thought, had already booked July 14 for their tripleheader. It's not like Jones and Murad Muhammad picked the date, and then Kery Davis and crew came with supersoakers to rain on their parade, right?

The promoters of the Jones scrap maintain they had the date first, however, and some checking shows that the first mainstream media mention of Jones/Hanshaw came on April 6 in the Cleveland Plain Dealer. Joe Maxse speculated that the event would go down on June 9.

The first mainstream media mention I see of the HBO Margarito/Williams/Gatti/Cintron offering came on April 26, from Keith Idec in the NJ Herald News, twenty days later.

The first time I see July 14 mentioned as a date for Roy vs. Hanshaw is in the NY Daily News by Tim Smith on May 20.

So where's the truth? As always in boxing, probably somewhere hidden in the middle, under a pile of contention and puffery.

Jones, who arrived almost two hours late for a press conference at the IP Casino-Resort-Spa on Thursday, has at least provided some decent soundbites and drama leading in to the affair.

"I am dishing out torture Saturday night," the 38-year-old Pensacolan said. "Can you all say "and still"? I will not touch Hanshaw until Saturday night. I will tear his ass up! They (the Hanshaw camp) are professionals and so is my camp. I am getting ready to go! The games are over Saturday night and the torture chambers open up.

Roy took the opportunity to rap two fighters he still sees as rivals in skill and profligate. "This ain't gonna be like Mayweather-De La Hoya with all that talking and, when the bell rang, nothing happened," Jones said. "This is going to be pain and torture for Hanshaw!"

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Hanshaw, a 29-year-old Ohioan, too has risen to the occasion with his pre-fight bluster. OK, he's not in Mayorga's league, but how many are?

"I was about to fall asleep up here," he said. "I have worked too hard for this. This is my whole life! I am ready to rock and roll. On Saturday night, I will put Roy Jones' old ass on the canvas.

The day before, Hanshaw promised the press fireworks on Saturday.

"I want to say this now, right to Roy's face...Roy, you have been knocked out by (Antonio Tarver, by Glen Johnson...this will be another repeat on July 14."

When trying to stir the PPV pot, it never hurts to have PBF Sr. around to spew some.

"My son, Floyd Mayweather Jr., is the world's best, pound for pound," Senior said. "Don't be shocked, Roy Jones, when you get stopped by Tony Hanshaw. Roy is an emotional fighter and when emotion steps in, logic steps out."

Lou Duva, age 85, added his voice, and aura of decency, to the mix.

"Roy Jones is going to win by a knockout," Duva said. "Hanshaw's team, if they are looking for bets, can come to me. I got Roy Jones but the boxing fans at the Mississippi Coast Coliseum and watching all around the world on PPV TV will be the winners. I know there are other fight shows on TV but only this show has a real legend and that is this one here with Roy Jones. Be sure to watch my guy, welterweight Oscar Diaz from San Antonio, in the co-feature. What Hanshaw should be doing is kissing Roy Jones for Roy giving him this great opportunity."

Murad Muhammad put in his two cents.

"There will be 380 countries watching this event," he said. "They will see that the Gulf was down on its knees but is getting back better than ever."

Let's see, let's do some math, and try to put this proposition in clearer economical focus. 380 countries, times 2,000 watchers per country (yes, this is truly theoretical, from the depths of my butt, conjecture here), that equals 760,000 buys. That times \$29.95, comes out to \$22,762,000.

Whoa, maybe Murad and Roy and Co. will come out of this better financially than we can guess. But wait. Let it not be said that we don't do some real journalism here at TSS. Let me quickly bop over to my trusty Google, and fact-check ole Murad.

Wha...what's this?

About.com geography expert, Matt Rosenberg, says that there are 194 countries in the world. Some territories, or regions—like Bermuda, Puerto Rico, and the UK, are actually governed by other nations—but seemingly Murad was counting those. And the other 200 countries he's talking about? Does he consider Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx separate countries? Has Murad gone and wired up Mars, Pluto and Uranus for cable, and is factoring those locations in?

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Hyperbole is part of the game when it comes to promoting a fight. So let's just chalk up Muhammad's math miff to fight-time, hype-time excess. Let's also hope that Jones and Hanshaw is a pleasing scrap, and at the end of the day, everyone gets their check.