Written by Michael Woods
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No fight in recent memory has been a more logical candidate for an immediate rematch than the Jermain Taylor/Kelly Pavlik Sept. 29 thriller in Atlantic City which saw Pavlik shrug off a knockdown and stick around long enough to put a kayo flurry on the unbeaten middleweight champion.

There was talk that Pavlik would take an interim fight before Taylor and he gloved up for a sequel, but the interim option has been junked, as Taylor says he's ready to get his revenge on the Youngstown hitter.

One hitch—-the middleweight title won't be up for grabs in the rematch, which will likely take place around mid February, maybe in Las Vegas.

Instead, Taylor has conceded that he had no business, at age 29, trying to demand his body make 160 pounds, the self-same class he debuted at as a pro back in 2001. So he's calling for the sequel to be fought at or under 166 pounds, and thus, no belt will be on the line. Unless, maybe Floyd Mayweather buys Boxing Digest magazine, and BD goes into the sanctioning body business.

TSS talked to Taylor's promoter, Lou Dibella, and asked him if the absence of the belt diminishes the sequel somewhat.

"Jermain was such a good champion, he would've moved up to 168 pounds, but he insisted that he stay there and give Kelly a chance," Dibella said. "I don't think it matters at all that the middleweight title isn't on the line. It was a sensational fight. We're not doing this because we don't want a sanctioning body not to get paid. But Taylor is a big guy, not as young as Pavlik, 166 makes more sense. You can make the argument that belts are less relevant these days, but this isn't being done to diminish the belt."

Dibella gives Taylor props for sticking at 160 to give the 25-year-old Pavlik a crack, and maintains that the Ohioan would've been fighting Giovanni Lorenzo on Boxing After Dark for the vacated middleweight strap had Taylor gone north before testing Pavlik.

Maybe that fact is being considered when we learn that it appears that the money for the sequel will be split 50-50 between the new champ and the now challenger.

Hats off to all involved, if this does turn out to be the case when all T and Is are crossed and dotted. An even split, which prevents ego-fueled feuding (cough cough Winky Wright) and lessens the momentum for the return engagement, is so reasonable, and so wise, and so instructive to all promoters and fighters. The terms could still be up for debate, as Pavlik's trainer Jack Loew has been making noise that his guy might not fight for a 50-50 split, as he considers him the main drawing card in the equation.

The rematch will likely land on PPV, so of course there should be plenty of pie to slice up.

One question that is on many minds: will Emanuel Steward get a piece? The sage of Kronk stepped in for Pat Burns after Taylor/Hopkins II, and it is clear that if Taylor hasn't slipped in that time frame, then he certainly hasn't flourished either. There's no way blame can be attributed accurately. We can't discern from the outside if Taylor loves the sport as much as he did, if the weight drain sapped his energy too much, if Steward cannot hope to give ample time to JT with all his top tier clients and rising stud prospects.

Dibella doesn't know what Taylor's corner will look like in his next fight.

"It's not my decision to make," the promoter said. "It's not for me to say."

So, will Taylor say?

Co-trainer Ozell Nelson, Taylor confidante, told TSS that Team Taylor and Steward will get together soon, and see where they stand. "We haven't really talked about it," Nelson said. "We'll get together in the near future. But you can learn a lot from a loss. And I betcha the next time if Jermain gets Kelly hurt, he'll pick him apart this time."

The absence of the belt won't make the sequel any less compelling, Nelson says.

"The belt really doesn't matter," he said. "It's about whipping that boy's ass."