

Two Old Pros-Can They Still Deliver?

Written by Michael Woods

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No, it's not a dream matchup that everyone was clamoring for.

Roy Jones vs. Tito Trinidad would've made more sense about seven, eight years ago, when both guys were still in or around their prime. Weight wise, not so much, even though dreamers thought Roy could drop down and Tito could beef up to make it happen, pre 9-11.

Tito jumped from 147 to 154 to fight David Reid early in 2000. At that time, Jones was in his fourth year at 175, after jumping from 168 to fight Mike McCallum for the WBC's light heavy title. It would've taken too much haggling to get that done at that time.

But now, with the magic of aging, and lengthy layoffs (cough cough Tito), the weight differential impediment has been eliminated. The January 19 contest in NY pitting two future Hall of Famers will be contested at a "catch weight" of 170 pounds or less.

I like that term, and find it useful to make my main point in why I think this fight has, unfortunately, the makings of a severe snoozer.

I don't see Tito (42-2), whose best work came when he was weighing 23 pounds under that "catch weight," actually being able to catch the Jones (51-4), who is still elusive enough to dance circles around the plodding Trinidad.

Happily enough for both men, they will make plenty of millions to engage in a match in which there is quite a strong possibility that no deeply impactful blows will be landed.

And Tito, who turns 35 on January 10, could make a side sponsorship deal with Rust-Oleum to garner a little something extra until the next time he gets bored, and decides to come back. Tito's fought three times since 2001, and fighting someone who can slip and move like Jones, even reduced capacity Jones, is not a match made in heaven.

Jones, who turns 39 on January 16, certainly likes his chances.

"Some of the odds makers have me as a five-to-one favorite," said the Floridian, who looked reasonably sharp against Tony Hanshaw (UD12 win) in July. "They don't know what they're talking about. I should be a 50-to-1 favorite."

Trinidad well knows that he best get to Jones early, or risk relying on his legs and stamina holding up in late innings.

Jones maintains, for the press anyway, that he foresees an early night, too.

"Tito says it won't last two rounds," he said. "I'm going to be nice and give him two more rounds and beat him in four."

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Trinidad, for his part, believes that fighting at 170 won't be a detriment to him.

"I don't think fighting at 170 pounds is going to be a big deal," Trinidad said. "The heaviest I've fought has been at 160 pounds. I'm a little older now so I carry my weight a lot better than I used to."

I'm trying to be fair and balanced here, so I'm trying to drum up a positive or two for Tito going into the fight. Hey, how about overconfidence on Jones' part?

"I can fight at practically any weight right now," he said. "I can drop down to 168 pounds and take on (Joe) Calzaghe. I'll fight him anywhere he wants. Jones Jr. is back and ready to fight."

Both guys have been disturbingly gentlemanly in the leadup to the fight, leading me to believe even more heartily that a polite sparring sesh could take place on January 19. I hope not, as you guys all know I'm a crusader for the consumer, and want everyone to get a good bang for their PPV buck.

Poll time: check in, and tell us whether you will or will not buy this fight...