

## Aging Fighters Suffer Dangerfield Syndrome

Written by Raymond Markarian  
Tuesday, 22 January 2008 19:00

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An interesting development occurred during the post fight press conference after Roy Jones defeated Tito Trinidad via unanimous decision. Jones received a great deal of appreciation. The praise was not given from the media or fans, it was displayed by the fighters that shared the ring with him on Saturday night.

Respect is a concept that has not been far from the boxing career of Roy Jones Jr. With every victory comes an endless amount of admiration from his support group, fans, and a certain portion of the media.

In sports, however, to gain respect from your peers, that goes a long way. Respecting an opponent's punching power, jump shot or tackling ability can be viewed as the greatest form of gratitude for another athlete. However there are certain competitors that gain more appreciation than others.

There are not many athletes in sports that become an idol to their opponents or teammates during the midst of their careers. Men like Tiger Woods, Michael Jordan, and Muhammad Ali have all received the recognition of greatness from their fellow competitors with good reason. Throw the name of Roy Jones Jr. onto that list as well.

During the post fight press conference, the comments from the other boxers about Roy Jones Jr. were subtle. It was not like they were worshipping the former pound for pound king, they were merely showing gratitude to a boxing icon.

Every boxer sitting on the platform during the press conference, (besides the tough guy himself, Andrew Golota) spoke of Roy Jones as if he was a living legend. The Michael Jordan of boxing if you will.

Alex Bunema, the man that knocked out Roman Karmazin, in one of the bouts prior to Jones/Trinidad said, "It was an honor to step into the same ring, and be in the same event, as my idol, Roy Jones Jr." After the comment, Roy and Bunema shook hands in an image of gratification from both fighters.

Mike Mollo, the fighter that went to battle with Andrew Golata for 12 courageous rounds and Devon Alexander, the 20 year old junior welterweight prospect that defeated DeMarcus "Chop Chop" Corley in the first televised bout of the PPV show, gave their praises to Jones as well.

Perhaps the respect from those young boxers will continue to boost "Superman's" ego. But maybe not, maybe we should all take a moment to think about the positive things that came out of Roy Jones' victory on Saturday night.

Hello... Did anyone else realize that Jones is still a household boxing name?

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How many sports fans outside of the boxing purists know that Roy Jones is 39 years old and past his prime? It is probably as many as those that think that Mark McGwire didn't take steroids.

Roy Jones is 39 years old, but who cares? At least he can still fight. Are the UFC fans concerned with the fact that Randy Couture was 44 years old in his last fight and Chuck Liddell, the 38 year old, is the most popular fighter in the UFC, even though he lost 2 of his last 3 fights? No, they aren't.

However, there is little patience in boxing. How quickly do we forget our current boxing heroes? Pound for pound this and pound for pound that. We all get lost riding tails of the front runners in boxing. But at times we forget to acknowledge the accomplishments of active living legends like Roy Jones Jr.

Why is it important? Because he will probably retire within the next few years and he should be appreciated for the excitement that he brought into the ring. In boxing, there needs to be some depth in our perception.

Active boxing legends that are past their prime should be treated with the same respect baseball, basketball, football, and soccer give to their icons. In boxing, when a fighter falls from the top of the heap, we are quick to disregard him. However, the same cannot be said for most other sports.

In football, another 39 year old athlete, well past his prime, named Brett Favre, is receiving nothing but compliments for this past football season. But that is nothing new for him. The all-time great quarterback has had an up and down decade to say the least. However his position with NFL fans has not wavered. Football fans recognize that Favre is near the end of his Hall of Fame career. But respect the fact that he was a 3-time MVP during his prime and still competes near the championship level.

This is one of the beauties of the so called mainstream American sports. They have a unique respect for aging legends that can still do it. Brett Favre is receiving the same respect today that John Elway, Larry Bird, and Cal Ripken Jr. got before him, during the end of their careers. The main stream sports value their aging heroes that are still active. Boxing rarely does.

In boxing, Roy Jones Jr. was the long time pound for pound king and fighter of the decade in the 1990's. Today, he can still fight with some of the best in boxing, but there are many pugilist fans and experts, who view him as an over-hyped has-been.

Dare I say, poor Roy Jones, he is arguably as accomplished as any boxer since Sugar Ray Leonard and more talented than any boxer, possibly ever, but is hardly given the recognition of a living legend.

Here is a question, which is more accomplished in sports, Brett Favre or Roy Jones? For argument sake, let's say they are equals. Then why doesn't Jones receive the same type of gratitude?

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The sports media and fans alike can say what they will about the Jones vs. Trinidad event on Saturday night. It is a given that both fighters are past their primes and this fight should have been made years ago.

Furthermore, boxing is, and perhaps will forever be, a young man's sport. But the aftermath of the Jones' victory, and the praise that he received from his pugilist counterparts during the press conference, only strengthens the fact that he is a boxing idol.

Like it or not, Roy Jones Jr. is a boxer that most young fighters try to emulate in the ring. If you do not believe me, ask Andre Ward, Devon Alexander, Mike Mollo, and most of the 2008 U.S. Olympic Boxing team.

From a proper viewpoint, athletic icons in the twilight of their careers are good for sports. The mainstream sports fans have the right idea. We should appreciate our boxing heroes while they are still here, not after they are gone.

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