

Mosley/Judah: A Call For Double Drug Testing

Written by Michael Woods
Monday, 24 March 2008 19:00

New York City is a region that thrives on chaos. The inhabitants are brazen in their directness, and don't suffer fools gladly, so that combo leads residents to say what's on their mind, to heck with tact and diplomacy. New Yorkers don't beat around the bush, 24-7, because frankly, there isn't time to mince words. The cost of living being what it is there, to lose precious earning time talking circles or to spare someone's feelings isn't cost efficient.

So it was curious for me to listen to Shane Mosley and Zab Judah, who'd been sniping at each other when they met up in LA on Monday, mainly surrounding Team Judah's desire to have Mosley take a doping test from a non-commission lab, being the picture of politeness at ESPNZone in NYC on Tuesday.

Judah camp-member Crocodile cranked up the decibels, promising "guerilla warfare" when Judah and Mosley get it on in Vegas on May 31, in a fight to be offered on HBO pay-per-view. (No titles will be on the line, though the winner, with a credible showing, cuts to the head of the line in the title shot sweepstakes in a pairing with Mayweather, Cotto, Cintron or Margarito and Quintana.)

But no, there were no steroid accusations being slung back and forth as Judah, dressed in a snappy three piece ensemble, topped off with a fedora, and Mosley, looking in tip-top condition in a black T, took to the mike.

Shane's dad/trainer, Jack, even predicted that Shane and Zab would be friends again after the combat is finished. Argh, what happened to the surliness, the edge, the smack talk we New Yorkers indulge in and crave?

In one on one's though, both men got into the NY spirit a bit more.

Judah was especially chill when I first approached him, however, and played dumb when asked why he was almost lovey dovey after being combative days the day before.

Judah did promise to KO Mosley, a tall order considering none of Mosley's losses have come via stoppage. Judah, who looked on the mediocre side in his last two 2007 outings, against journeymen Edwin Vazquez and Ryan Davis, is 30 years-old. The knock on the talented Brooklyn born hitter is that by and large, he hasn't been able to get over the hump in the big gigs. Against Kostya Tszyu, his first outing against Cory Spinks, Carlos Baldomir, Floyd Mayweather and Miguel Cotto, Judah has had his moments, but hasn't been able to pull it all together. This time, he says, it will be different. How so, he was asked?

For one thing, Judah said, he'd been off for a year coming in to the Cotto fight, save for a tuneup two months before the June 9 NYC scrap, which saw Cotto take a TKO11 nod in a heated, entertaining, low-blow filled scrum. "I jumped into a big fight," he said. "And it was one of Cotto's best fights. Picture that Zab Judah at 100%. I'm coming in, and can stand with

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confidence. I know what I'm gonna bring."

Judah said he had no power over what the press says about him when assessing his career, when asked if the knock on him that he's not been able to win the biggies is fair, or foul. "It don't bother me," he said. "I got a job to do, that's fighting. The media says what it's gonna say."

Judah sounded the right tone when he refused to engage in a 'what comes next' session.

"I know what happens when I look forward," he said. "Baldomir, I overlooked him. But I know for sure I'm gonna stop Mosley. He turned down a \$100,000 bet (offered by Judah, who promises to stop Mosley on May 31). I have no idea why. But I'm gonna come out blazin." There, a hint of NYC brand smack talk.

Zab's dad Yoel promises his son will be in peak condition. He has Zab running in the Catskills, he said, and is happy there will be ample time to get in premier condition.

"He will be in shape," the father/trainer said. "He'll be in 'dog' shape. That means he could run from here to Africa. We got four months to train. We got two more months. We got the time to prepare. No excuses."

Yoel did reference the steroid cloud. "I hope Shane comes in clean," he said.

Mosley did admit that he ingested steroids back in September, before he beat Oscar De La Hoya in 2003, but said he was given the illegal substance unknowingly, by a former strength coach. That coach, Derryl Hudson, has filed a suit for defamation against Mosley, stating that it is untrue that illegal substances were "pushed upon" the boxer. A hearing on the matter is scheduled for May 29, so it is not a mystery why Team Judah might want to keep the distracting matter front and center in Mosley's mind.

Mosley didn't seem distracted or miffed when the subject was brought up. He has a clear conscience, he told TSS, and in fact would like Judah to be tested stringently for any and all illegal substances as well.

"For all the other drugs he might be taking," he said, with a mischievous gleam in his eye.

Like what, pray tell, I asked.

"I don't know," he non-answered.

Mosley is a slick trash talker. He sort of does it in the same classy way he fights. Not bombastic, not brutish, he slithers in an allusion to Judah's party-hearty history, and plants seeds of doubt about Zab's behavior.

Mosley touched on the absence of NY-style trash talk.

"We left the steam in LA," he said. "He wants to talk trash that's cool with me."

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Mosley, at 36, says he's still learning in the ring. He tried too hard to KO Cotto, he said, and this time around will try and let a KO come naturally, instead of pressing. First, he said, he will look to put rounds in his pocket.

Mosley will not assume, he said, that the lacking Judah, prone to undertrain, or burn out in the first third of the bout, will be present on May 31.

As for Judah's compare and contrast tactic, in which he's said that he did far more damage to Cotto than Mosley did, Mosley countered by explaining that he wanted a re-do with Cotto, but Cotto has wanted no part of it. Cotto figured he'd "get out while the going is good," SSM said.

Mosley said he's still in the game for the foreseeable future, that he "can't see the end of the tunnel. I got a long time." He loves to fight, he said, and "that's a problem." Mosley chuckled, as did the writers present at the roundtable, with that paradoxical pronouncement.

So what would make him consider leaving the game?

"If I was beat pole to pole for 12 rounds by some young kid, or beat up every day in sparring," he said.

He and his dad, who'd been on the outs for a spell a couple of years ago, have been getting along well. Not to say they don't always see eye to eye, Mosley said, but it's been smooth lately. He's walking around at around 160, he said, and certainly looks unHattonesque coming into camp.

Mosley said that he's a bit rejuvenated, that the Cotto fight fired him up, and that he'll bring the fire he was saving for a rematch, and turn it towards Judah. "Before I was serious," he said, "but now there's a different fire in my gut. Cotto's not in the ring, but somebody's gotta get it. Cotto got me amped to fight again. Zab will feel my wrath for me preparing to fight Cotto."

Mosley admitted that it was looking like he was going to tangle with Ricardo Mayorga, but his team and Don King could not come to terms. Mayorga's rep has enjoyed an uptick, what with his November win over Fernando Vargas, but give King props for smartly steering the Nicaraguan clear of SSM.

Endnote: some of you readers were wondering if this fight would be a free HBO showing, or on PPV. It is a PPV, and I asked HBO PPV guru Mark Taffett if he considered making this a non-PPV event, considering both men are coming off losses in their last marquee matchup. No, he told me, Golden Boy's Richard Schaefer pitched it to him as a PPV, that made sense to him, and besides, HBO has some sweet bouts upcoming in the coming months, for those averse to paying the extra premium for top tier bouts.