Most people will agree that former light heavyweight champion Antonio Tarver talks a lot better than he fights. His listlessness has resulted in him losing several high-profile bouts that were very winnable for him.

The ironic thing about him is the fact that after he took the path of least resistance against the likes of Roy Jones Jr. and Glen Johnson in their first encounters, as well as Bernard Hopkins, he acts like those fights never happened.

Displaying Shannon Briggs type delusion, he continues to dispel the myth that he is the "undisputed" champion.

During the buildup to his April 12th fight against IBF champion Clinton Woods, 41-3-1 (24 KOS), which will take place at the St. Pete Times Forum in Tampa, Florida, in Tarver's home state of Florida, he was in usual form.

"You're sitting next to the man who beat the man," Tarver, 26-4 (19 KOS), railed at the 35-year-old Woods, who hails from Sheffield, England, and seems to have more class in his pinky than the 39-year-old southpaw Tarver has in his entire being.

"I'm undisputed baby, you're ordinary, I'm extraordinary," Tarver continued. "You can't carry my bag. You're gonna' get knocked out on the 12th."

Tarver then informed Woods that he had never been cut, a comment that he solidified by stating emphatically, and somewhat questionably, that he (Tarver) was "pretty as a girl."

Woods seemed totally unruffled by Tarver's histrionics. The only response he mustered was "By who?" when Tarver continually told him he was going to get knocked out.

Like many others, the likeable Woods seems perplexed as to how Tarver can have such a high opinion of himself.

The sad thing is that Tarver's boorish antics have taken center stage in this promotion. Woods finds himself a forgotten participant, as does WBC champion Chad Dawson, who will be defending his title against another former champion, Glen Johnson, in the co-feature of the Showtime-televised card that has been dubbed "TNT: Title Night in Tampa."

Jack Hirsch, the senior American correspondent for Britain's long established Boxing News magazine, said that Woods is a much improved fighter since incurring his sole stoppage loss, a sixth round defeat to champion Roy Jones Jr. in September 2002.

His two decision losses were to fellow Brit David Starie and Glen Johnson.

"Woods is not a great fighter, but he does a lot of things very good," said Hirsch, who has been on the boxing beat for over 30 years. "He moves forward and applies a lot of pressure. He's a strong, well-conditioned and durable guy. You have to have those qualities to get in the trenches three times with Glen Johnson."

The three Woods-Johnson fights, all of which took place in England, were great learning experiences for the current champ. They drew in their first encounter, Johnson won the second by decision, and Woods emerged victorious in the third, also by decision.

The first two were for the vacant IBF title, while the last one was third defense of the vacant title Woods won from Rico Hoye in March 2005.

Hirsch believes that Woods, who hopes he can parlay a victory over Tarver into an epic all-British showdown against Joe Calzaghe, should Calzaghe beat Bernard Hopkins on April 19th, is more than ready for the tough-talking but non-producing Tarver.

"Tarver is a total dog in the ring," said Hirsch. "He showed it in the (1996) Olympics, when he didn't fight hard against (eventual gold medalist) Vasilliy Jirov. As a pro he shut down in his loss to Eric Harding, but what was most telling was his third fight with Roy Jones. Jr. He had Jones hurt in the 11th round, but just lied on the ropes and did nothing."

Tarver, who had been favored to win the gold at the Atlanta Olympic Games, came home with a bronze medal. He didn't seem the least bit bothered by his disappointing performance.

Of course there was Tarver's second fight with Jones, where he asked Jones during the ring introduction what his excuse was going to be when he got knocked out that night. Tarver went on to knock Jones out in the second round, but never capitalized on that tremendous victory.

Afterwards he split two fights with Johnson, did just enough to beat Jones in the third bout, relinquished his right to be called a champion by doing nothing against Hopkins, and then looked extremely ordinary in a decision victory over Elvir Muriqi and a fourth round stoppage of the overmatched Danny Santiago in his last fight in December.

Hirsch said that Tarver is a good looking guy who should be able to use his outgoing personality to ingratiate himself to the fans. Instead, explains Hirsch, "he acts stupid on a regular basis."

"Some people are good villains," said Hirsch. "When Floyd Mayweather Jr. mouths off you can see a little smirk on his face. He's doing it for the sake of the promotion. But Tarver takes himself too seriously. He comes off like a jerk, because he is such a dog in the ring. He doesn't back up what he says."

If Tarver is clinging to his second round demolition of Jones as the basis for his arrogance, he better come up with a different muse. If he sees that as his claim to fame, his delusion is akin to a washed-up politician who is still living off of a stirring speech he gave years earlier.

“This should be the end of Tarver,” said Hirsch. “Woods knows that if he beats him, a fight with him and Calzaghe would be huge. It would probably be big enough to fill Wembley Stadium.”

He believes that Woods is much too professional and determined to let such a grand opportunity, especially at this relatively late stage of his career, pass him by.

“If Tarver continues after this fight, he’ll probably go back to being an ESPN fighter or an opponent on HBO,” said Hirsch. “Woods should beat Tarver going away. My prediction is he’ll either beat Tarver clearly or make him quit.”