

Can Light Hvy Resurrection Last?

Written by John Nguyen
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For a division that was lacking a pulse a year ago, the light heavyweight division sure has come to life as of late, becoming one of the most intriguing divisions in the sport.

Joe Calzaghe's razor thin victory over Bernard Hopkins not only signified a changing of the guard at the top of the heap, but also meant another superstar being added to a very recognizable mix. As the true light heavyweight champion, Calzaghe is the man to beat, and therefore the man with the most options.

While the most gracious thing for Calzaghe to do would be to offer Hopkins a rematch to clarify the muddled result of their first meeting, it doesn't seem like he will do so. The fighter we can deduce to be on Calzaghe's mind is Roy Jones, the only fighter he named directly in his post-fight interview. At 36, and with the hourglass of his career dwindling away, Calzaghe is clearly trying to get the most bang for his buck in the twilight of his career. A fight against Jones in Calzaghe's native Wales would be huge, and a win would be just the type of note Calzaghe would like to end his career with.

As for Jones, he is experiencing a career surge himself. Left for dead in the wake of his three consecutive losses in 2004-2005, Jones bounced back with two low-profile wins, and then more notably against Felix Trinidad. Whether Jones' decisive victory over a rusty, blown-up Trinidad is indicative of a true comeback is unclear. What matters, however, is that he once again appears to be a significant box office attraction, and in the business of boxing, perception is all that matters.

Aside from a Calzaghe-Jones matchup, there is other pertinent business to be done in the light heavyweight ranks. A long-awaited fight between long-standing light heavy Antonio Tarver and newbie Chad Dawson has been discussed for a while, and seems to be in motion after both men recently won against Clinton Woods and Glen Johnson, respectively. For Tarver, his dominant victory over a sleepwalking Clinton Woods showed that he still had some life in him, after several consecutive disappointing performances indicated otherwise. The young gun of the division, Dawson, escaped with a victory against Johnson in a fight that left many questions unanswered about the young man's ability to have a long reign at light heavy. Hopefully, both Tarver and Dawson will get the opportunity to answer any remaining questions where such things should be settled: the ring.

Outside of the two biggest fights the 175-pound division has to offer, we still find viable names such as the aforementioned Bernard Hopkins, who is probably the best forty-something to ever lace them up. Hopkins seems able to remain a player in the division as long as he wishes to. Taking the obligatory "I'll have to think about it" stance when asked if he will continue to fight on after the loss to Calzaghe, Hopkins still has a name to attract other fighters, but one must question what Hopkins still has left to prove or earn at this point, other than recognition as the first active fighter to be eligible for Social Security.

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Perennial odd-man out Glen Johnson again finds himself just outside all of the big-fight discussions, and judging by the hellish fight he gave Chad Dawson, he probably shouldn't expect many calls about high-profile fights any time soon. But you just get the feeling that Johnson will do what he has always done: fight anybody he can as often as he can, and wait for the next opportunity to happen. The one glimmer of hope for Johnson is that Roy Jones has gone on record saying he would like a chance to avenge his KO loss to Johnson if no other big fights can be made. Funny how the loser (Jones) has the privilege of offering the winner (Johnson) a rematch. Perception really is everything...

So how long will this resurrection of the light heavyweight division last? After all, Chad Dawson is the only fighter mentioned above younger than 36. Hopefully, it will last long enough to get a definitive answer as to who the top dog in the division is at the moment, since we all know how rare it is for anything in boxing to be definitive. Who knows? We might even get a decent scrap or two out of the deal. The best approach whenever something like this arises in the sport is to sit back, shut up, and hope for the best. We may be pleasantly surprised.