

ONLY ON TSS: The Wisdom of Dundee

Written by Raymond Markarian
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The Marksman checked in with The Wiseman, Angelo Dundee, and chatted before Dundee worked Macho Camacho's corner in Hector's Friday night fight.

RM: How long has Camacho been training?

AD: Oh, Camacho has been training for months. It's remarkable because he is cutting weight and I'll tell you he looks like a 25 year old. He's still got the juice. He loves to train, he loves to run. I told him he had to cut down on the running because he was trying to run about eight or nine miles. But I cut him down to three because he's not a marathon runner. Fighters don't have to run that much. All they have to do is tune up their legs. It's only three minute rounds, they don't have to worry about distance running.

RM: Camacho was telling me that he wants to fight Oscar De La Hoya or Mayweather next. Do you think he would be ready?

AD: Well, he can talk that way. But the point is, let's see what he (Camacho) looks like in the ring. Don't jump the gun. I have had too many experiences where everything looked good but it was empty inside. That is what happened to Muhammad when he fought Larry Holmes. Muhammad was in tremendous condition, the best shape in his life. But I didn't know that the doctor was giving him thyroid pills. He was losing weight but the zest wasn't there.

RM: So, you're saying that Ali's doctor was giving him thyroid pills before his fight with Holmes?

AD: Yep, I thought the doctor was giving him vitamins.

RM: Were you shocked when you knew Ali was receiving thyroid pills?

AD: These things happen. You look back and you say: shoulda, coulda, woulda, but, it happened so what's the difference?

RM: How did you know Ali wasn't himself against Holmes?

AD: Muhammad was always able to suck it up and come back. You know, he would get hit with some shots and he would retaliate. But, he wasn't fighting back in that fight with Holmes. So, I knew something was wrong because he didn't have the zip.

RM: Don't you think that part of the reason why Ali wasn't the same against Holmes was because it was later in his career?

AD: Well listen, I will put it to you this way, there is always a guy out there that can beat the other guy. It was Larry's night, you know. God bless him. Ali and I had a lot of great nights. So

you take them as they come.

RM: How do you keep a fighter motivated after a loss?

AD: Motivation is a misused word. Fighters are great professionals. They prepare themselves to not let a loss happen again. They'll try to improve on whatever they did before. Sometimes, a loss is a win because you learn something from it. That is the important thing.

RM: So your idea is to get out of a fighter's way after a loss?

AD: Fighters are all wound up differently you know. There are no two alike in this profession. Some guys you can grind. With some guys, you have to make them feel like it's their innovation, not yours. Fighters are very intriguing kids. Otherwise they wouldn't be fighters. I mean, I am even talking about a four-round kid. You have to be something special to be a fighter. There has to be something special inside of you to get in that ring to prove that you're the man. So I respect all fighters and I get along with them for that reason.

RM: Was Muhammad Ali your favorite fighter to work with or did you have someone else in mind?

AD: Well, Muhammad was the easiest guy to work with that's for sure. He was the first one to enter the gym and the last one to leave. Training was second nature for Muhammad. So that made life easier for me. You know, I can't beat this to death to you too much, you never work with the same guy twice. They were all different. Thank God for the difference because you can blend with them.

RM: That is a testament to the trainer as well if you can relate to different types of fighters.

AD: Well, you got to know your guy. You got to know your people. To get the ultimate out of them is the way to do it. A good trainer does not point at a fighter to show how well you do. You point at the job that you do. There are a lot of fighters that I have worked with that people never saw and I was really pleased with myself without any recognition.

RM: Is there any boxer in particular that comes to mind?

AD: I had a bantamweight kid by the name of Arthur Johnson and he fought a fighter from Thailand named Pichit. This guy Pichit was an undefeated champion and Arthur Johnson beat him in 1994, he should have won the title but they didn't give the win to him. Johnson did everything but knock the guy out. I don't know what those judges were looking at. It was criminal that they didn't give that kid (Johnson) the title. But, he was a great fighter; Arthur Johnson was the nicest kid that you could know. I learned a lot from him. A few years later, he fought Johnny Tapia and I was jumping all over him. We were in the corner in between rounds and I remember saying an off color word. Johnson responded very calmly by saying "Mr. Dundee, you know you shouldn't say that." I didn't realize that the kid was a weekend preacher. (Dundee laughs)... You know you try a variety of things to juice up a fighter every which way. You try to get the best out of them because they have talent galore. But you got to get it out of

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PT. 2, coming soon...