

This Fight Is All Or Nothing

Written by Rick Folstad

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I'm guessing the movers and shakers who sit in meetings and come up with catchy slogans for prize fights, didn't spend a lot of time thinking about this one.

I can see it now. A couple of guys are walking down the hallway, headed for the meeting room where they hold the catchy-slogan meetings, when one turns to the other and says, "You know, for both these guys, this fight is pretty much an all or nothing thing."

"Hey," the other guy says. "You've got something there. That's a great idea for a slogan. We'll call this fight, 'All or Nothing.' "

Bingo. Catchy slogan found. Backs patted and hands shaken. Meeting canceled.

They're right. "All or Nothing" pretty much sums it up.

The "All or Nothing" fight between former world champions Jeff "Left Hook" Lacy (24-1, 17 KOs) and Jermain "Bad Intentions" Taylor (27-2-1, 17 KOs) is scheduled for Nov. 15 at Vanderbilt University in Nashville.

Whoever wins this fight will be back in the hunt for a world title, though they will still have some serious work to do.

Called a WBC super-middleweight eliminator, a press release states the winner of this fight is "guaranteed" a WBC title shot against the winner of the Carl Froch - Jean Pascal fight.

Key word here is "guaranteed." Replace it with "should." There are no guarantees in the fight game.

Whoever loses this fight, well, they can probably still find work as a paid speaker on the banquet circuit. Guys who smoke cigars and wear strange-looking hats with little tassels dangling from them, will pay good money to listen to an ex-champ talk about what it's like to knock another guy on his butt under the lights in front of 15,000 screaming fans.

It will, however, mean a serious cut in pay. But the work isn't as dangerous.

Along with being former world champions, Lacy and Taylor were also Olympic teammates and are still good friends. But between them they share more than history and friendship. Both have been on a downhill slide over the past several months.

For Taylor, that includes recent back-to-back losses to Kelly Pavlik. In his first loss to Pavlik, Taylor was stopped in the seventh.

Lacy's hard times started two years ago when Joe Calzaghe gave him a hometown beating in

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Great Britain. Following that one-sided heartbreaker, Lacy scored a majority decision win over Vitali Tsypko; a decision over Peter Manfredo Jr.; and one of those “I-didn’t-look-too-good,” majority decision yawners over Epifanio Mendoza in July.

After his lackluster showing in the Mendoza fight, Lacy decided he’d had enough, which, in truth, meant he wasn’t getting enough.

“I’m retiring,” he told the Tampa Tribune in July. “There will be no fight between me and Jermain Taylor (which had already been penciled in for Nov. 15). This business is dirty. That’s all I have to say. This is a very dirty business. I would advise anyone who has kids, not to ever let them in the fight business.”

Yeah, but the dirty business sure beats parking cars, waiting tables or pounding nails for ten bucks an hour.

Lacy’s threatened retirement from the dirty business lasted a few hours, or about as long as it took for someone to make a phone call or two and up the ante.

So the fight with Jermain Taylor was back on.

“I’ve known (Taylor) since our amateur days, but we both know this is a business,” Lacy said, forgetting to mention the “dirty” part. “Any fight where we’re going into the ring with all this on the line, it makes it one of the most important fights of my career.”

It already has a catchy slogan.

“This fight could not be more important for these two fighters,” said promoter Lou DiBella in one of those recently released press releases with the catchy slogan. “One of these guys is probably going to get knocked out, and the one who gets knocked out is probably going to have a really difficult time coming back to do anything significant in this sport. This fight really is all or nothing.”

Catchy.