

The Wise Man Weighs In: Dundee Talks Boxing

Written by Raymond Markarian
Tuesday, 21 July 2009 19:00

Like any good fighter, Angelo Dundee takes the bounces as they come. It is no secret that the boxing wizard knows the game better than most. Dundee does not claim to know what boxing needs to become a mainstream sport in the United States once again, but his words are carefully calculated and considered.

'Boxing is in of need this' or 'boxing is need of that' is not the prescription Dundee thinks that fight fans need to worry about. "We need to stay away from the hypothetical questions," Dundee said. "It is impossible to compare a fighter to another fighter. And how a fighter from the past would match up with a current champion is impossible to tell because you never meet the same guy twice."

Taking Breaks and Taking Chances

How hard a trainer pushes his fighters is essential to any training camp, he says. When Foreman postponed the Rumble in the Jungle due to injury, Dundee kept Muhammad Ali in Zaire, but it was the fighter's decision whether or not to keep training, not the maestro's.

Nacho Beristain, the trainer of Juan Manuel Marquez, was left with a difficult decision last month after Floyd Mayweather postponed the anticipated fight against Marquez because of an apparent rib injury. The bout was supposed to take place on July 18th, but was pushed back for two months to September 19th.

The Marquez camp had to either continue training for an additional two months--which could hurt a fighter's peak level, a common theory that a boxer reaches a pinnacle in training that they do not want to get over--or they could have taken a break from training, and returned to camp a few weeks later.

Marquez's people chose the latter and Dundee agrees with the strategy.

"A professional guy could handle any situation. The trainer that is working with him is not chopped liver, they know what they are doing," Dundee said.

He compared Floyd Mayweather's 21 month layoff to Sugar Ray Leonard's much ballyhooed fight with Marvin Hagler in 1987, when Leonard was in supreme condition despite a three year break.

"Hey, how did Ray Leonard layoff for so long and come back and beat Hagler? You could go half nuts trying to figure out these things," Dundee said. "The reason there was that Ray Leonard was an athlete. He was always doing something. Baseball, basketball, tennis, whatever, but he was always was in great physical shape all he had to do was get into fistic shape. It is in the individual.

The Wise Man Weighs In: Dundee Talks Boxing

Written by Raymond Markarian
Tuesday, 21 July 2009 19:00

"The best story I have is about the first time I worked with Ray Leonard. 'I said what will you have for dinner Ray?' He said 'A cheeseburger.'" I said 'Please eat a cheeseburger.'

"It is much to do about nothing, what works, you use. When you are a young kid, you can eat anything. But when you get older you have to switch the system. It is like having an older car; it still runs fine after a few years if you know how to handle it differently. When you have an older fighter, you have to tweak the system."

Tune Up Fights

After a long layoff or sometimes before a big fight, boxers elect to have a tune up fight to shake off the cobwebs. The opponent chosen for that encounter is typically under qualified and has little chance for victory. Sometimes the bouts show how impressive a champion can be. However, the no name opponents sometimes turn a supposed walk in the park into a disaster. Evander Holyfield vs. Bert Cooper, Eric Morales vs. Zahir Raheem, and Zab Judah vs. Carlos Baldomir, are just a few examples. Dundee does not like the idea of a tune up. He says a fighter should minimize the risks and just go for the big honchos.

"What do you need a tune up for? You are a professional," Dundee said. "You do your tune ups in the gym. That is what training is for, to get ready in the gym. I do not think that you gain anything from a tune up expect the activity that is all. Training gets your body used to being in the gym and in a fighting situation. It is a grind. The first guy that overcame that for me was Muhammad because he had fun in the gym. George Foreman was the same way."

He went further to make it clear that the work done before fight night is the greatest form of preparation. "There is nothing that you could take that will supplement good training and conditioning. If you are not in shape, nothing works. There is nothing that you could drink or swallow that could supplement conditioning."

What about heart?

"Every fighter has heart. Heart is unquestionably a misused word. You would not be a fighter if you did not have a ticker. I have never questioned a kid's courage. They got to have it or they would not be one on one."

Pacquiao vs. Cotto

Although Dundee has worked with some of the greatest fighters in boxing history, he will be the first to tell you that he does not own physic powers. Before Pacquiao's last two fights against De la Hoya and Hatton, Dundee picked the Filipino to fall victim to defeat. With all things considered, the De la Hoya choice was a well calculated gamble. But Dundee caused an unexpected ruckus with his choice of Ricky Hatton over Manny Pacquiao.

Dundee read the bombardment of comments from TSS fans that hated on his Hatton choice and took it in stride.

The Wise Man Weighs In: Dundee Talks Boxing

Written by Raymond Markarian
Tuesday, 21 July 2009 19:00

<http://www.thesweetscience.com/boxing-article/6735/angelo-dundee-talks-hbo-thrilla-doc-marg-acheato-pacquiao/>

“You take the good and bad,” Dundee said “I enjoyed reading all of that because I respect everyone’s opinions. It was great to hear what they said. I have no problem with it. It is boxing.”

He is still debating the winner of Pacquiao vs. Cotto on November 14th. But the Hall of Fame trainer could not resist making a prediction that few would disagree with. “This is going to be tremendous. It is a match made in heaven.” Dundee said. “I am looking forward to Pacquiao/Cotto. This fight will catch your imagination because Cotto keeps coming, and this other kid Pacquiao, is so good, so slick. I think Pacquiao is the best fighter right now and this is a great fight.”

I asked the boxing legend to break down the fight, to tell us how he sees the fighters matching up? “To me, it is probably Pacquiao’s toughest fight.” Why? “Styles, Cotto never stops coming. We will see a great fight. I will probably end up going to that fight because I want to see it.

“Listen, Freddie Roach is doing a hell of a job. Every time I see Freddie, he reminds me of Eddie Futch.”

Talking Shane Mosley

Sadly, Sugar Shane is not getting the marquee fight that he deserves. If he cannot get in the ring with Pacquiao or Mayweather after destroying Margarito, then who is he going to fight? As much as I enjoy watching Andre Berto and Paul Williams throw it down, it would be a step backwards for Mosley to take on either guy and he, and the rest of the Golden Boy camp, are aware of this.

Roger Mayweather has gone on record to say his nephew Floyd’s toughest fight is the one with Shane Mosley because Mosley knows his craft better than most. He also said that Mosley will beat Pacquiao and I agree with him. Then Roger Mayweather said that a Mosley vs. Mayweather fight will not happen until Money Mayweather gets by Marquez in September and Pacquiao in May.

So when is the Mosley and Mayweather fight supposed to happen, according to Roger? When Mosley is 40 years old? Dundee and I discussed Shane Mosley’s dilemma. He thinks that Mosley will get his just due with a little patience.

“Shane Mosley will have no problems because he always makes great fights. They say all these guys are avoiding Mosley. But they will fight him. If they want to get better they will fight Shane Mosley.”

He thinks Roger Mayweather’s timeline will hold true. “Mayweather will go with the Marquez fight and then fight the winner of Pacquiao and Cotto. After that it is Shane left standing. This is all good for boxing. Let me tell you, fighters make fights. As long as the boxing fans know who the principles are, they are going to get excited. It is what we need.

The Wise Man Weighs In: Dundee Talks Boxing

Written by Raymond Markarian
Tuesday, 21 July 2009 19:00

“You always hear me say it Ray, it is what it is on the stool. If you have a good night then you are a winner. But if you don’t then hey, it is that simple. You got to keep bouncing.”

Does Losing A Fight Sometimes Help A Young Boxer?

Last month Vicious Victor Ortiz headlined his first marquee event in front of a hometown crowd at Staples Center in Los Angeles. He was knocked out in the sixth round of an exciting high action fight. Afterwards Ortiz seemed shaken emotionally and questioned his own desire to continue pursuing a boxing dream. Dundee thinks that a tough loss helps the young fighters that have the ambition to continue boxing and learn from their mistakes.

“Sure, it comes with maturity. All the gym work in the world is not going to supplement fights. That is where you find out what you got. How to handle a crowd, how to handle himself outside the ring, there is a lot of things that go into play when you handle a fighter.”

Dundee feels that Victor Ortiz is a special talent and this defeat is merely a stepping stone for his career, not a backwards plunge.

“How old is he again, 22? He is a kid. Give me half a dozen Victor Ortiz’ ok? Any fighter can have a horrible night. Some nights you cannot seem to do anything, you cannot help it. A lot has to do with the guy that you are fighting. Maybe he just has what it takes to beat you. I told you, the toughest profession in the world is a fighter. There ain’t nothing that you could do about it. You just have to bounce back from it. The guys that bounce back from it are great fighters.”

George Foreman vs. Evander Holyfield April 1991

Last week ESPN2 replayed one of the greatest heavyweight clashes that took place over the last twenty years. Holyfield vs. Foreman was not only an intriguing fight because of the combatants’ age differential, but also because of the intense exchanges between the two warriors in the ring. The 28 year old Holyfield was defending his heavyweight title for the first time since beating Buster Douglas, who beat you know who in Tokyo, Japan.

Many fight fans did not expect much out of Foreman on that night who at 42 years old was a sentimental favorite at best. But Angelo Dundee, Foreman’s corner man at the time, saw a glimmer in Foreman who outweighed Evander by 49 pounds on fight night.

“I do not know how Holyfield took those shots,” Dundee said. “Holyfield has amazed me his whole career. That guy is remarkable. ”

According to Dundee, Foreman was a much different fighter mentally during his comeback than he was in the 1970s when he would rely on brute force to destroy the opposition.

“You see Foreman when he came back was a better fighter. He was steadier. He used to grind you out and his condition was great. And he did it on his own. He got himself in the best physical condition that he could. When Foreman came back he had the technique. He knew how to work his body. He is a remarkable man because he knew exactly how to work. I had a

The Wise Man Weighs In: Dundee Talks Boxing

Written by Raymond Markarian
Tuesday, 21 July 2009 19:00

great time working with him.”

We agreed that Holyfield vs. Foreman was probably one of the last great heavyweight fights.

“Yes it was, back and forth,” Dundee said. “But Riddick Bowe and Holyfield were some great fights too. Bowe was a hell of a fighter.”

I argued by saying that Bowe was only great in his time.

Dundee corrected me: “They are all great in their time.”

What Is Happening Now?

Dundee was at the Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, NY when he heard the news about Alexis Arguello'd unfortunate passing. Dundee had a strong friendship with the three-time lightweight champion and said that he was deeply saddened by the loss. Another close friend of his and his former fighter, Yama Bahama, passed away last month as well. Dundee used to train Bahama, whose real name was William Butler, in the 1960's and they were close friends throughout the years.

The good news is that Dundee is currently a lead member of a team that is working on a project to implement full health insurance coverage for fighters in the sport of boxing. A group called the Brotherhood of Boxing and boohooboxing.com is working with the Teamsters Union to present fighters an option to become a member of their group and get medical coverage. A membership drive is currently being held from July 15th to August 31st.