

Maybe Lamont Peterson Can Beat Floyd Mayweather? Not!

Written by Frank Lotierzo

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Newsflash: junior welterweight Lamont Peterson reportedly worked over welterweight Floyd Mayweather Jr. while sparring during preparation for his upcoming fight with Juan Manuel Marquez on September 19th. If that's not enough to convince you that Mayweather's in trouble and going to lose to Marquez, nothing will. The report that Petersen may have bettered Mayweather during a sparring session recently actually grew legs and has been bantered about as if it actually means something, which it absolutely does not. One more time -- whatever happened during the rounds Petersen and Mayweather sparred is meaningless and irrelevant.

Boxing history is replete with instances where one fighter bettered another fighter in the gym several times, yet the fighter who had the better of it sparring wasn't nearly as good as the fighter who supposedly got the worst of it. Some fighters are terrible in the gym and don't look that good. On the other hand there are fighters who are great gym fighters but come apart on fight night.

During Joe Louis's prime he couldn't do a thing with Jersey Joe Walcott, (who at that time wasn't nearly the fighter he'd eventually become) in the gym. In fact Walcott dropped Louis three or four times in the gym and was given his walking papers by Louis's trainer Jack Blackburn for doing such. Sure, Walcott lost a disputed decision to Louis in their first fight, but he was knocked out by him in the rematch. And that was by a Louis who was seven years past his peak.

Muhammad Ali was a terrible gym fighter and didn't go all out when he sparred. Jimmy Ellis often bettered Ali in the mid-sixties while sparring, but was taken apart by him when they fought. One day at Ali's Deer Lake training camp in Pennsylvania, Roy "Tiger" Williams was complaining to some of the other fighters about Ali not paying him fast enough for sparring. When Ali got word of it he called Williams on it and paid him on the spot from the cash he had in his pocket. Ali paid Williams extra money and told him to glove up at that moment because he needed the work. Ali and Williams sparred ten rounds that day and Ali was trying to knock Williams out and dominate him. However, Ali had life and death with him and never came close to dominating him. Everybody knows Ali always had his hands full when he sparred Williams. Based on the sparring they did, it was hard to tell for sure who was the greatest and who was the fringe contender. Knowing that, is there anyone who would've bet on Williams to beat Ali if they were to fight?

Joe Frazier sparred the way he fought, all out. Yet a year and a half before they fought in 1969, Jerry Quarry bettered Joe in the gym twice during the same week. Former heavyweight contender Duane Bobick was a genuine life-taker in the gym. So much so that his manager former heavyweight champ "Smokin" Joe Frazier was sure that Duane would knock Ken Norton out when they fought that he was instrumental in the fight being made. Frazier sparred Norton and Bobick numerous times in between 1970-76 which obviously led to him knowing both fighters extremely well. All Bobick had to do was get by Norton and he'd face Ali for the undisputed heavyweight title late in 1977. Norton stopped Bobick in less than a minute and

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Duane was never the same again.

During the late seventies and early eighties I saw some lesser fighters better fighters who were much better than they were. I saw middleweight Curtis Parker work over light heavyweight Michael Spinks so completely while sparring on Monday and Tuesday one week, that Spinks took the next two days off to heal and recover. Yet Parker never fought for the middleweight title and Spinks went on to be one of the greatest light heavyweight champs in history. Parker also had his way with Dwight Muhammad Qawi when they worked together. In the same ring I saw Jerry "The Bull" Martin and Qawi fight a light heavyweight version of Hagler-Hearns 20 times while sparring, and Martin got the better of it 15 or 16 of those times. A year later Qawi defended his WBC title against Martin and destroyed him.

An hour after seeing Marvis Frazier pepper an out of shape Tex Cobb for three rounds, Cobb got a call offering him a fight with Earnie Shavers in two weeks. At the time I remember turning to Willie "The Worm" Monroe and saying maybe Marvis should fight Shavers instead of Randall? Fifteen days later Cobb stopped Shavers in the eighth round on the Hearns-Cuevas under-card.

The stories of a great fighter being worked over by a lesser fighter are never ending. I witnessed Curtis Parker take apart Thomas Hearns sparring in 1979; who would you bet on had they fought? Lamont Petersen getting the best of Floyd Mayweather in the gym means absolutely nothing. Floyd and Lamont are in a different world as far as fighters go.

The only thing that can come out of Petersen doing so well versus Mayweather in the gym is, Lamont's confidence has escalated a little. Which is great for him.

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