

David Tua: As Long As He Can Punch He'll Seduce Us

Written by Frank Lotierzo

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David Tua still has dynamite in both hands at age 36. In fact he even exhibited a little upper-body and side-to-side head movement while the fight lasted. The few combinations he threw were accurate and explosive. Those kind of adjectives haven't been said about Tua since he knocked out Michael Moorer in the first round a little over seven years ago.

Granted, Tua's victory over Shane Cameron this past weekend didn't come as a surprise to anyone who has seen Cameron fight. But Cameron isn't a stiff and the way Tua destroyed him was nothing short of impressive.

Officially the fight was halted in the second round, but it was really over at the end of the first round after Tua had Cameron down twice. Some reports have overstated how fast Tua's hands looked along with his effort to press forward and cut off the ring. However, three minutes and seven seconds of ring time isn't enough to conclude that Tua is back to the 1997 vintage, when he lost a fiercely contested decision to Ike Ibeabuchi.

Without question David Tua is one of the hardest punching heavyweights I've ever seen. Every punch is hard, with both hands. Going by his fight with Cameron that looks to still be the case. Shane was badly hurt by the first clean left-hook Tua landed and really never recovered from it. At 237 Tua looked to be in very good shape and appears to understand that the sand running through the hourglass regarding his career has almost run out. Again, it's hard to tell just how good his stamina was after one round, but his body looked firm. That said, it wouldn't hurt him to try and get down closer to the 230 range for his next fight. Then again we're talking about David Tua and he's just as likely to show up and weigh 252 for it as he is 237.

As per what has become typical Tua rhetoric this decade in which he's gone 15-2-1, he's saying all the right things after his impressive showing versus Cameron. Things such as: some of his managerial issues are behind him now and he's ready to fulfill his quest to win a version of the heavyweight title. Boxing fans have been hearing these type things from Tua ever since he lost a lopsided decision to then heavyweight champ Lennox Lewis nine years ago.

Tua's main problem has been that he's had two extended two year plus layoffs over the last six years. During that time his weight has escalated and he's acquired a lot of ring rust. Like Mike Tyson after he lost his rematch to Evander Holyfield in 1997, Tua is constantly fighting to get his weight down while trying to get his body in fighting shape. This pattern of training and fighting has stagnated Tua and kept him from getting back into the heavyweight mix.

It's almost unfathomable that David Tua has only fought for the heavyweight title once since turning pro in late 1992. Tua holds four stoppage wins over fighters who have held a piece of the heavyweight title, (Oleg Maskaev, John Ruiz, Hasim Rahman and Michael Moorer). In fact Ruiz just fought for the WBA title last year and Maskaev and Rahman are currently ranked among today's top-20 heavyweight contenders.

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Today's heavyweight division is two-deep, Vitali and Wladimir Klitschko. After the Klitschkos it's a crap shoot and any one of the other contenders could beat or lose to the others on any given night. Tua's power and aggression could be a stimulant in the division if he keeps himself in shape and continues to stay busy. When looking at the landscape of the current heavyweight division, Tua is the only legitimate life-taker as far as punching power goes. When he lets his hands go and lands flush he can knock out any heavyweight in the world, including those named Klitschko.

The problem David has is delivering his power, something he's only shown capable of doing when he's in great condition, which most boxing observers know is not a given with the Tuaman. However, if Tua has an epiphany and is truly dedicating himself to making one final run at the title, winning a portion of it is certainly not an unattainable goal for him.

As long as Tua carries fight altering power in both hands he'll continue to seduce boxing fans into thinking about what could've been, and maybe even what could still be. Tua proved he can still hit. The question that remains is will he stay true to his word and continue to fight and stay busy enough to merit another title shot? Boxing fans love the heavyweights and no fighter can inject excitement into the division like one who can really punch. And punching has never been an issue for Tua. But staying active has.

Tua said he plans to fight once more before Christmas. If that happens maybe then Tua can be taken seriously. Until then it's just the same old seductive wording that most boxing fans want to believe, because it's great watching a once in a generation puncher like Tua fight.

Lastly, neither Klitschko is going to fight him if they don't have to, so Tua has got to work himself back into the title picture. Will he have the discipline or patience to bother doing that?

Frank Lotierzo can be contacted at GlovedFist@Gmail.com