

Checking In With Andre Ward Ahead Of Allan Green Clash

Written by Raymond Markarian
Wednesday, 02 June 2010 15:00

On Thursday, TSS took a nice drive through Oakland and ended up at Kings Gym to watch Andre Ward train for his upcoming showdown against Allan Green on June 19th. Ward was fresh off of a 13 round sparring session when I got ahold of him.

Ward told me that he was ready. And well, he looked ready. "Sparring is going great, but you can't go pedal to metal every day. That is called over-training, my friend, Ward told me.

"I am putting in work. We got three weeks to go, man, Ward said as he was wrapping his hands in preparation for what his trainer Virgil Hunter had in store for him.

The philosophical Virgil Hunter had a lengthy discussion with me about Ward's training routine, Allan Green, and some other matters in their training camp as I was able to corner him while Andre Ward was jumping rope.

RM: In the past you have talked about Allan Green losing sleep over the fact that he has to eventually face Andre Ward. Let me ask you this: How is Team Ward preparing for Allan Green?

VH: We're preparing the same way we always prepare. During the fight, things are always changing. You have to be able to make adjustments. I believe that preparation for a certain style is overrated. You just have to know your athlete, and what works best for him. So in this particular case, our preparation is the same as always. We are preparing to win.

RM: So you are preparing to do what is best for you? You are not preparing to stop Allan Green from what he wants to do?

VH: No, we are preparing to win. And that is by any means necessary. As the fight progresses Andre will know what to do, from the opening bell.

RM: Do you see the fight going the distance?

VH: No, not this fight.

RM: Would you like to make a prediction on the outcome?

VH: No prediction on how the fight is going to end. It just will not go the distance. We have had a plan from the very beginning. Everything I have said about Andre Ward has come to fruition. One thing that is vastly overrated is KO percentage. We were never interested in that. When we were coming up through the ranks, we put a down payment on a house. When we got the championship, we purchased the house. Now, we intend to keep the house. Just from that scenario alone, I do not expect to see very many fighters going the distance with Andre Ward in the near future.

Checking In With Andre Ward Ahead Of Allan Green Clash

Written by Raymond Markarian
Wednesday, 02 June 2010 15:00

RM: So the mentality is that Allan Green is trying to break into the house you have built and you guys are trying to keep him out right?

VH: Well, I would like to say that this is Andre's mindset. To get the title, you have to have a "go getter mentality. Now that we have the title, it is a keeper mentality. I could see the difference in his training. Andre has a keeper mentality now. It is something that I wanted to naturally evolve. When he was coming up, I didn't want to get him a whole bunch of opponents that he could have easily knocked out. That would have given him a false sense of security that he was a knockout artist.

RM: How would you rate Allan Green's knockout power? There have been reports that he considers himself a knockout artist.

VH: You know, Allan Green specializes in knocking out people who have already been knocked out. It is incredible really that several opponents that he has fought had already been knocked out seven or eight times. So, I don't think we could accurately gauge "this power that Allan Green thinks that he possesses. I mean, I can't knock him. If he is crowning himself a puncher because he has knocked out people that other people have knocked out then that is ok. But until you knock out the best, I would not even consider myself a knockout artist.

RM: In your mind, do you feel like he is not prepared for this fight?

VH: No, I think he is prepared. Someone brought an article to my attention that said that Green is looking the best he has ever looked in a camp. I think he is going the extra mile. He is training harder than he has ever trained. So, that tells you right there where his mind is. He is worried. And he has a good reason to be.

RM: A good reason to be worried?

VH: A very good reason to be worried.

RM: Do you think it is good to be worried before a fight?

VH: It all depends on how it affects you. If you take it into the fight the wrong way, it could drain you. But if you take it into the fight, and you are able to use it in a positive way, then it could help you learn how to master worries and concerns.

RM: So it is all about controlling your anxiety.

VH: Exactly. Talking about controlling anxiety, I have seen him (Green) in several situations where things did not go his way. Even in his last fight, he came back to the corner and asked trainer John David Jackson a few things that he should have already known. In particular, he was asking how to fight Tarvis Sims. Sims was hitting Green with lead flush punches. Green was confused in that fight. I was surprised. But it is one thing to walk, and another thing to walk it.

Checking In With Andre Ward Ahead Of Allan Green Clash

Written by Raymond Markarian
Wednesday, 02 June 2010 15:00

RM: Are there any other specific instances where you feel like Green has been confused and out of his element?

VH: Let me say this, I have a lot of respect for this kid. And I have a lot of respect for the fight game. So anything that I am saying is not intended to be a put down, or an insult. He also says some of the things that he feels. But he also says that he has respect. So you can't knock him. But there have been a few instances in his career that make you wonder. For one, he turned down the Antwun Echols fight that was going to be on ESPN. And he turned down the opportunity to fight Kelly Pavlik. Those are two well known hard punchers. So I think he is worried about the other guys' ability to knock him out. I don't know if something happened in the gym. Maybe he doesn't have the ability to take a big punch. I don't know that. Maybe he is afraid to get hurt. We have seen him hurt. But we have also seen him recover. It is all speculation. The main thing is that we are going to find out on June 19th if all of these things are true.

RM: So you don't think the fight is going the distance. But you told me before that you think Allan Green is going to quit in the middle of the fight. Can you elaborate?

VH: Well, he puts a lot of emphasis on his punching power. He puts a lot of emphasis on the fact that he could afford to make mistakes in this fight. But no, he cannot afford to make any mistakes. He cannot afford to rest. He cannot afford to take his time. In this fight, he is going to fight at a faster pace that he has ever fought before. In this fight, he is going to have someone in front of him that he cannot hit. He is going against someone that is stronger than him, has more stamina, and has a tenaciousness of a game bred dog. Again, it is easy on the outside, but once you get in there, you are going to find out why Andre Ward has not lost since he was 12 years old, why he is an Olympic gold medalist, and why he is the super middleweight world champion after only 20 fights. We don't mind continuously proving it to the opponents, to critics, and the fight world, until the concession is made, that you are dealing with one violent individual when you get into the ring against Andre Ward.

RM: You have also told me that Andre Ward has never been in a close fight.

VH: Well in respect to people who keep saying that he is getting a hometown advantage. There has not been one fight where a referee or judge has had to save him. We have never had a close fight at home. All of the fights have been lopsided. So you can't say that he has the favor of judges, and referees. He has been in close fights early in his career. And that was to develop him. We have spotted age, weight, and experience from the amateurs all the way to where we are today.

RM: So are you satisfied with where Andre Ward is at right now in his career, as being considered the best super middleweight in the world at 26 years old?

VH: No, I am not satisfied with where he is right now. We have a long way to go. We have a lot of canvas to build on. But I expected him to win the super middleweight title when he got the opportunity. He has only had 20 fights. So he does not have as much experience in terms of fights, as some of the other opponents have had. But he has the experience overall, of being

Checking In With Andre Ward Ahead Of Allan Green Clash

Written by Raymond Markarian
Wednesday, 02 June 2010 15:00

battled hardened. Andre has been doing this since he was nine years old. And he has been fighting the best from the amateurs up to the pros. So no, we are not satisfied. There is a long way to go. That hunger is increasing with every fight.

RM: How do you feel about the preparation in camp so far?

VH: Well, I am holding him back right now. Andre is a fighter that has never been out of shape since he started fighting. Even with that setback with the knee, it never affected his conditioning at all. And when you have a clean living kid, who does not run the street, drink, smoke, or chase women, his strength continues to stack. If the fight takes place tomorrow he would be ready to go. We are right where we want to be.

RM: Allan Green has said that Andre Ward is not a warrior. And basically that it is not in Andre's DNA to have the warrior mentality during a fight. What do you think about that?

VH: I have to agree with Allan Green 100%. Andre does not have the DNA of a warrior. He has the DNA of a winner. He is groomed and built to win. It is almost an insult to say that all a fighter has to offer in this sport is to be a warrior. So my thing is that you could put a warrior, a gorilla, a tiger, a lion, or any other predator in the ring, but the drive to win will overcome that warrior instinct or whatever he says that he is. We have seen warriors quit. I have seen the king of the beasts get kicked in the head and give up. So, I think that it is an insult to pursue boxing from a warrior capacity. We set out to pursue three goals in this sport. One goal was to win the goal. We did that. The second goal is to be a world champion. We did that. The third goal is keep it until we retire. We are going to do that. So to answer your question, Andre is not a warrior. He is a winner.

RM: So it does not matter what you call yourself. It is all about going in there to win?

VH: It does not matter what you call yourself. There will be certain situations in this fight where he will have the opportunity to prove that he is a warrior. I have seen some of the so called warriors, some of the greats, take one beating and transform themselves into boxers. Marco Antonio Barrera turned into a boxer because he was too much warrior. Arturo Gatti turned into a boxer in the latter part of his career because he found out what happens when you try to be too much warrior. You could be a warrior if you want to. Come on with the warrior mentality and put yourself in the line of fire, and we will gladly accept that challenge.

RM: Do you feel like Green talking about being a warrior is a lack of confidence?

VH: You know, each individual has to get themselves mentally ready for a fight in their own way. Andre Ward is a money fighter. When it comes time to perform, he is going to perform. I think Allan Green is a courageous fighter. I don't think he is afraid of Andre Ward. I think that he is definitely leery of the unknown and that is where he is going, the territory of the unknown. I think what he needs to understand is that Allan Green will look slow motion to Andre Ward. He is going to see everything. He is going to know what to do. And he is going to execute.

RM: So Allan Green might be talking a good game to get himself pumped up for the fight?

Checking In With Andre Ward Ahead Of Allan Green Clash

Written by Raymond Markarian
Wednesday, 02 June 2010 15:00

VH: Even though he is talking, he understands that he is in the most dangerous situation that he has been in his life. His coach said that Allan Green is training with the most intensity in his life. Green knows what he is up against. That is why he is working so hard. When you flip the coin, he thinks he has a punchers chance. But when he looks at it from our perspective, he knows that we could win with more than just one punch.

SPEEDBAG

Check out Green in camp:

www.youtube.com/watch

The inaugural Super Six World Boxing Classic is a groundbreaking, six-fighter tournament from SHOWTIME Sports® featuring the class of the super middleweight (168-pound) division from around the world. All bouts in the Super Six tournament will be contested under the Unified Rules of Boxing. Each boxer fights three bouts against different opponents in the field in the points-based Group Stage of competition (Win – 2 pts with a 1-pt bonus for KO/TKO; Loss – 0 pts; Draw – 1 pt.). After the Group Stage, the four fighters with the highest point totals will advance to the single-elimination Semi-Finals. The winners of the Semi-Final bouts will advance to the Finals and fight for the inaugural Super Six World Boxing Classic trophy.

OAKLAND (June 3, 2010) - Undefeated World Boxing Association (WBA) Super Middleweight Champion and America's last Olympic Gold Medalist Andre Ward (20-0, 13 KOs) will throw out the ceremonial first pitch at his hometown Oakland As game against the Minnesota Twins tomorrow/Friday, June 4, at the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum.

Ward, who captured the WBA belt with a convincing, 11th-round technical decision over Mikkel Kessler in the Super Six World Boxing Classic opener on Nov. 21, 2009 at Oracle, is looking forward to taking the field.

Im excited for this opportunity to show my support to The Oakland As," Ward said. "They are my hometown team and I am a baseball fan!"

Ward will make his first title defense against world-ranked contender Allan "Sweetness Green (29-1, 20 KOs), of Tulsa, Okla., in a Super Six World Boxing Classic Group Stage 2 bout on Saturday, June 19, on SHOWTIME® at the Oracle Arena. Ward will look to successfully defend against the mouthy Green in front of his local fans and take another step toward winning the Super Six World Boxing Classic.

Tickets for the June 19 event are priced at \$300, \$150, \$65 and \$35 and are available at the Oracle Arena Box Office, 7000 Coliseum Way, Oakland, CA 94621, Phone: (510) 569-2121 or online thru www.Ticketmaster.com.

The Ward-Green event is presented by Goossen Tutor Promotions, Antonio Leonard Productions and DiBella Entertainment.

ABOUT SUPER SIX WORLD BOXING CLASSIC