

Hopkins-Jones II: There's No Demand For It

Written by Frank Lotierzo

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As most boxing fans know by now the rematch between Bernard Hopkins 50-5-1 (32) and Roy Jones 54-6 (40) is officially scheduled to take place April 3rd at the Mandalay Bay Resort Casino in Las Vegas Nevada. Luckily for Bernard and Roy there are still plenty of Hopkins and Jones fans still around, but even at that there's not much interest in this bout.

The rematch between Hopkins and Jones has been bantered about ever since Jones won a 12-round unanimous decision over Hopkins 17 years ago. The problem was they couldn't agree on the dollars and cents part of the deal which prevented them from getting together again in the years following their first meeting. When they agreed to fight a rematch late last year, the pilot for the promotion was supposed to begin with them fighting and presumably winning their last bout on December 2nd. Hopkins kept up his end of the deal by winning a lopsided decision over Enrique Ornelas in a light-heavyweight bout in his hometown of Philadelphia. Earlier that day Jones was dropped and stopped by Danny Green of Australia in the first round.

Generally speaking, a guy getting knocked out in the first round of his previous fight by someone who doesn't have a high profile isn't exactly a good promo for a PPV bout. Once the result of Jones fight with Green got out, it was assumed by an overwhelming majority of boxing fans with the exception of Bernard Hopkins, that the purposed rematch between them was dead.

After learning Jones lost in the first round against Green, Hopkins said, "how did he lose? It's the way that you lose. Jones lost on his feet, not on his back. I don't think the ref should have stopped the fight. When you have someone like Roy Jones Jr., he deserves the benefit of the doubt. Calzaghe had him hurt worse than that, but they didn't stop that fight. I think I can still fight him." Something Hopkins had a hard time keeping a straight face while saying in the ring immediately after his decision over Ornelas was announced.

Wrong, Bernard. Based on Roy's showing over the last five or six years of his career, referee Howard John Foster saved him from taking more unnecessary punishment while Green was unloading on him without anything in return from Jones. The 41 year old Jones was knocked out in a very devastating fashion by Antonio Tarver and Glen Johnson in three of his last five defeats and took the worse beating of his career versus Joe Calzaghe 13 months before fighting Green.

Jones is finished as a fighter physically and mentally. And in addition to that he has no punch resistance.

Hopkins said, "a rematch with Roy has been in the back of my mind for a long time and it's finally going to happen. I have accomplished a lot in my career since that night in Washington, DC in 1993, and I am going to end this thing between me and Roy once and for all."

Obviously Hopkins wants to redeem himself against Jones. But Roy even at 41, still holds the

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advantage in hand speed and fights a style that bothers the 45 year-old Hopkins. Jones will force Hopkins to chase him down, which is not Hopkins at his best. Roy is very susceptible to aggressive fighters, especially who can punch. Only that's not who Hopkins is as a fighter. I believe Jones will enter the ring to fight Hopkins more confident than he was in some of his previous defeats. But will it matter?

Jones said, "we're giving the fans what they want to see. They deserve this fight and why not supply the fans with what they demand? Now I can finally terminate the Executioner once and for all. My new nickname for this fight will be - The Terminator."

Is Roy really serious with his suggestion this is the fight boxing fans want to see or are demanding? If he is he's delusional. Hopkins can still fight at the highest level and really has never taken a beating in the ring, nor has he ever been stopped. Bernard is a technician and as he got older became more savvy and tricky. Instead of overwhelming his opponents in his forties, he takes the bullets out of their gun and dismembers them.

On the other hand Jones is like Muhammad Ali - a physical phenom who possessed once in a generation skill and speed. And like Ali he never learned boxing's rudimentary basics and fundamentals. Once they lost their warp-like speed, they became hittable. With the difference being Ali had a cast-iron chin and couldn't be knocked out, whereas Jones is prone to being hurt and stopped without getting hit with a flush hard shot. Evidenced by the grazing shot Danny Green had him wobbling all over the place with.

Hopkins normally isn't an aggressive attacker, but there is a 10 percent purse bonus for the fighter who can win via stoppage. It's doubtful Roy will push for that knowing Bernard has a great chin and he'll only put himself at more risk of getting stopped if he tries to take the fight to Hopkins.

The names Hopkins and Jones are big, but neither Bernard or Roy can fight for a complete round at this stage of their career. Hopkins hasn't won by stoppage since he put Oscar De La Hoya away with a body shot six years ago. And Jones hasn't looked impressive since he outboxed John Ruiz seven years ago.

Nobody wants to see Hopkins-Jones II in the year 2010, especially if they have to pay for it. The fight makes more sense for Hopkins because a win evens the score for him versus Jones. But he also risk going from one of the most relevant fighters on the scene (after beating Tarver and Pavlik) to an oldies act in one fight. Whereas Roy risk his final impression to boxing fans as being counted out or having to be rescued by the referee again.

Hopkins-Jones II is slightly more compelling than Holmes-Weaver II was. And there's no demand for it by anyone not named Bernard Hopkins and Roy Jones Jr.

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