

If A Fighter Could Get Away With Cheating, What Would He Do?

Written by Frank Lotierzo

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Hero journalism is something that I've come to expect in boxing writing. You know--how we read that every fighter in history is a warrior and they all have heart just because they got into the ring? And although I agree with a majority of that - all fighters aren't warriors. They don't always get into the ring with the intention of winning at the "C" and "D" level and sometimes even the "A" and "B" level. And those fighters who are only interested in winning and giving it their all every time out, fear losing and worry more about how they look than they do getting hurt or risking their lives when they fight.

That's why every fighter who has ever fought in the open class as an amateur and as a pro are open to whatever it is they can do to give themselves an edge over the rest of the field. It could range from anything as serious as injecting themselves with PED's/HGH to something as trivial as refusing to shadow box until right before they glove up on fight-night in the hopes of saving their stamina and energy for the ring.

There are a multitude of assets and skills that all fighters wish they had more of. Defense, speed, stamina, chin and punching power probably rank at the top. That said, there's only one on that list that can drastically alter the outcome of a fight if a particular fighter could improve upon it. And that's punching power. Even fighters like Earnie Shavers and Thomas Hearns were in constant search for something they could do to help improve their power.

If you take fighter A and he could do one thing illegal before the fight to aid him to beat fighter B, short of getting to fighter B and convincing him to take a dive, what would you do to improve his performance once in the ring? Obviously the first thing you'd have to do is come to a conclusion as to what actually works best to give a fighter an unfair edge over the other in the ring during the fight. Short of an extensive training and conditioning program, there's not much.

That leaves fighter A with the choices of either taking whatever he determined were the most effective performance enhancing drugs available or wrapping his hands with an illegal substance or removing the padding from his gloves. Remember... for this scenario you don't have to worry about fighter A being subjected to drug testing or his hands being wrapped or gloved up in front of the commission or a member of fighter B's corner.

Ever since the protocol as to how Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather were to be tested for PED's/HGH before and after their fight became a stumbling block to it being realized, I've written that it's a total myth to believe any form of steroid or PED can transform an extraordinary fighter into a great one. And because I don't believe steroids add enough to a fighter to make it worth him taking them along with what they can and usually do take away from him, that doesn't mean I advocate using them or don't have serious issues with a fighter who is juicing or injecting some sort of illegal substance - because I do.

However, the evidence that we've seen a fighter under the suspicion of using PED/HGH who performed well in a big fight and actually won is slim. In actuality it's hindered a majority of the

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fighters who admitted to using them knowingly or perhaps unknowingly, such as Fernando Vargas and Shane Mosley.

In the real boxing world there is only one thing a fighter can do to bend the rules and give himself a monumental advantage over his opponent. And that's to have his hands wrapped with an illegal substance that hardens and make his fist almost concrete-like. That or have the padding removed from his gloves. That's it. Short of doing one of those two things there's nothing else that can be done to assure fighter A has a huge edge over fighter B and will most likely defeat him if they are close in skill and experience.

In slightly under three months Floyd Mayweather and Shane Mosley will meet. If I had the proverbial gun to my head and had to pick the winner this moment, I'd probably go with Mayweather to win a decision in a tough fight. And you know what? If Mosley was allowed to inject every and any form of steroid or HGH/illegal supplement he wanted to while training for the fight, I wouldn't change my pick. Nope, I wouldn't even consider it. On the other hand if Mosley could have his hands illegally wrapped with a substance that hardens before he enters the ring or have some of the padding removed from his gloves, I'd pick him to knock Mayweather out.

So the boxing fraternity can argue all it wants as to the effect PED/HGH has on transforming an outstanding fighter into a great one. I for one am not convinced they give him anything and actually believe fighters regress in some ways as a result of taking them. What I do know is there's no doubt as to whether tinkering with a fighters' hand wraps and/or gloves provide him a significant advantage to a very lethal degree.

There's not a fighter alive who wouldn't choose having the capacity to improve his power if given the choice above all else. And there's only one thing that will guarantee that, and it's not any drug or magic potion or supplement.

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