

## Everybody Could Talk, But Only One Person Could Walk

Written by Raymond Markarian  
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In a conversation with TSS last week, Andre Ward discussed his reason for keeping mum in between bouts, and why he still needs to establish himself in the super middleweight division. The boxing pride of the Bay Area wants to keep a low profile before he takes on Allan Green on April 24th.

“We understand controversy sells,” Ward said. “People want to see the back and forth. And for some reason, if somebody does not give in to the back and forth, then there is something wrong with him. But I have proven my whole career that I am not afraid to go against the grain, and not do what everybody else is doing. I am used to this. man. I have gotten this kind of stuff since I was an amateur.”

Ward’s trainer Virgil Hunter also had something to say about why their camp is above causing a stir before fights. Hunter thinks their position is much more solidified than Green’s.

“It is not even a point about controversy anymore,” Hunter said. “In two fights, Andre put 10,000 in the seats. We don’t need controversy to sell. We have proved that. Green has been talking his whole career, and can’t sell out an exhibit room at the fairgrounds in Oklahoma. We will let him have his moment in the sun. But the bottom line is that he has to step in the ring on fight night. Everybody could talk, but only one person could walk.”

Showtime introduced Allan Green to the general public in the recent episode of Fight Camp 360 this past weekend. Green displayed his confidence on camera, but Ward does not want to get caught up in trash talking. When asked to respond to Green’s prediction of victory, Ward refused to criticize his opponent. He would rather let his actions do the talking.

“You have to work. Talking won’t do it. I think I have proven to fans and the media that you don’t need to talk. I am going to continue to hold fast on my integrity because I am a professional,” Ward said. “I am not going to get caught up on the airwaves, and the back and forth. Hey man, I am 26 years old, I am a grown man. I have a wife and three kids. I don’t have time for that stuff. But come fight night, it is going to be my opportunity to come out and get it. It is like Virgil said, ‘a lot of people could talk but only one could walk.’”

Ward put on an excellence performance against Mikkel Kessler to win his first bout in the Super Six tournament. However his stature as the best super middleweight in the division is still in question. Although some consider him a favorite to reach the final, the majority of the boxing public think Arthur Abraham will be the last man standing when the tournament is completed.

Meanwhile, Ward says he is not fighting to win over the mindset of those that doubt him.

“I take opinions with a grain of salt and continue to live my life in the middle. After the Kessler victory, some people called me the top super middleweight, then a lot of other people starting giving it to Abraham, who just came to the super middleweight division, and had a victory

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against Jermain Taylor. You know, I can't fight for the people's opinions. I want to win, that's the bottom line. I want to be great. That is what drives me every day, not what people are saying."

It has been stated that Ward has not lost a fight in over a decade. He is on a 150 fight winning streak, according to Virgil Hunter. But the Oakland native continues to challenge himself to stay motivated by studying successful athletes in other sports.

"I was watching 24/7 on Jimmy Johnson. I look at the way his team prepares, and I look at their mindset, as far as winning. Jimmy Johnson reminds me a lot about myself. He loves to win. And when you win, you have to take opinions with a grain of salt," Ward said. "If you are for me, I appreciate it. But if you are against me then that's your opinion. I use it as motivation."

Ward told TSS that any talk about his potential, his weaknesses, or his strengths is only window dressing. His true value will be proven in the ring.

"The thing that I am learning about boxing is that there is going to be a fight night. After all the talk, all the news on the internet, and rumors, and drama, there has got to be a fight. I am preparing, man. I am sweating every day. And I am looking forward to putting on a masterful performance."

Does he still have a chip on his shoulder?

"You could tell...? I do have a chip on my shoulder. But it is a good chip. You have to keep that. It is not a knock against anybody. Again, it is just like Jimmy Johnson said, 'I have all these things, but I want to keep it.' I have a championship, and that's a beautiful thing, but it is not time to look at the trophy case yet. I want to keep my championship for a very long time."