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Now that Bernard Hopkins, 51-5-1 (32) has evened the score with his career rival, Roy Jones, there's only one goal left for him to try and accomplish before shutting his career down. And that's adding his name to the list of fighters who have held the middleweight title and then moved up at some point in their career to capture a piece of the heavyweight title. As of this writing only Bob Fitzsimmons and Roy Jones have succeeded in doing that.

Immediately after Hopkins was declared the winner of his rematch with Jones, he said he wanted to be the heavyweight champ and fight WBA title-holder David Haye 24-1 (22), who stopped John Ruiz in the ninth round earlier that day. Most probably think Hopkins spoke a little too soon about wanting the Haye fight. And it's easy to see why. Haye looked terrific in becoming just the second fighter to stop the durable Ruiz. Obviously Haye would be a decisive favorite over the 45-year old Hopkins if they signed to meet. But after the way Haye looked against Ruiz, the risk/reward would be so out of balance in Hopkins' favor, how could he not take the shot? And if you're Haye - a fight with Hopkins has to look like shooting fish in a barrel, and the money would be Fort Knox, especially if the fight were to take place in England, something Hopkins would no doubt be willing to do for the right money. Not to mention he'd relish being the biggest underdog he possibly could be on fight night.

If Haye had been the dud that some including myself thought, it wouldn't have been out of the question for Bernard to have lived with him and possibly scored the upset. But Haye is more formidable than Hopkins thought he was before the night of April 3rd. It's Haye's chin that's going to let him down when he loses, which means that Hopkins won't be the guy to do it. However, Hopkins moving away from Haye is a lot different than Ruiz continually pressing forward into his gun-fire. Bernard would present a smaller target and Haye would most likely head hunt and look to end the fight with one big right hand. And if Hopkins somehow extended the fight beyond the first few rounds, he could mess with David a little bit psychologically. No, that's not an endorsement for Hopkins winning the fight, but if you're being optimistic on his part, it's something to consider. Although the best case for Hopkins is he stinks the place out in losing a one-sided decision.

However, a win by Hopkins at age 45 would have to be considered the biggest win and accomplishment in boxing history. It would jettison his legacy into a new stratosphere and eclipse what Fitzsimmons and Jones did as former middleweights who won the heavyweight title. Even an embarrassing loss by Hopkins to Haye wouldn't tarnish his career accomplishments at all and he'd laugh all the way to the bank.

Hopkins could still probably make the 168 pound super-middleweight limit, and the heavyweights today are bigger than they were a hundred years ago. So why not go for the smallest one holding a legitimate title belt who is much less experienced than either Wladimir or Vitali Klitschko, who are still considered the top of the food chain in the division? Although in fairness to David Haye, he's closed the gap and has to be considered no lower than three in the pecking order of the top heavyweights in the world.

Bernard Hopkins has compiled a remarkable career and record as a fighter and self manager. Other than losing his pro debut, he's avenged the only convincing defeat of his career that he suffered when he was decisioned by Roy Jones in his fourth year as a pro. Since then he's lost three very close decisions after turning 40 years-old to Jermain Taylor twice and Joe Calzaghe. And in reality he's at worst 2-1 in those fights based on what transpired in the ring.

Hopkins held the middleweight title longer and made more defenses of it than any other fighter who's ever owned it. Some of his critics question his opposition at middleweight. However, they conveniently forget that aside from Rodrigo Valdez, the two greatest fighters Carlos Monzon defended the middleweight title against were former all-time welterweight greats Emile Griffith and Jose Napoles when they were on the decline. And Monzon's 1973 rematch with the 36 year old Griffith wasn't his finest hour and many consider the decision to be controversial. Marvin Hagler is another former middleweight great Hopkins is measured against. And as it is the case with Monzon, it's often overlooked that the three best fighters Hagler defended the title against were an overfed all time great lightweight, and two former welterweight greats. Hagler certainly didn't look like a world beater during the 15 rounds he fought Robert Duran. Two years later he erased that memory with a three round demolition of Thomas Hearns - and then lost his title two defenses later to Sugar Ray Leonard who fought once in five years before facing Hagler. At least Hopkins devastated the two top welterweights he fought in Felix Trinidad and Oscar De La Hoya. Not to mention he's never been beat up or cut during a fight. How many boxers can that be said about?

Hopkins also tempted fate and convincingly beat the fighter who shattered Roy Jones' legacy to win the light heavyweight title, Antonio Tarver. But in fairness to Monzon and Hagler, they would've been overwhelming underdogs to Bob Foster and Michael Spinks, who represented the best fighters at 175 during their title tenure. (The same goes for Hopkins.) Again, the point is Hopkins cannot be admonished for Tarver not being on the level of Foster and Spinks. At the same time it also cannot be said with impunity that Monzon or Hagler would've defeated Tarver.

With the exception of Harry Greb and Sugar Ray Robinson, Bernard Hopkins has perhaps the deepest legacy of any other middleweight title holder in history. A win by Hopkins over Haye would have him nipping at the heels of Greb and Robinson. And at the worst his name would have to be mentioned in the same vein as Greb and Robinsons.' I know that's sacrilegious to even say as a joke, but the case in his favor, again, if he beat Haye, would be tough to refute.

If you want to say Mickey Walker, Marcel Cerdan, Tony Zale, Jake LaMotta, Dick Tiger, Charley Burley, Freddie Steele, Gene Fullmer, Carlos Monzon and Marvin Hagler would've have defeated Hopkins if both were at their best, you very well may be right. On the other hand it's nothing close to a reach to envision Hopkins beating every one of them as well. What can't be said is that they were more accomplished middleweights nor does their body of work measure up to Hopkins'. And it cannot be said even as a joke that there's ever been a middleweight who was harder to hit cleanly or took less punishment than Hopkins.

Bernard Hopkins the promoter has mapped out the conclusion of his career perfectly and is playing with house money if he does somehow finagle a fight with David Haye, who like Hopkins is promoted by Golden Boy Promotions.

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