

David Tua: Will He Finally Get It Right ?

Written by Frank Lotierzo

Wednesday, 03 September 2003 18:00

David Tua has to be the luckiest fighter in the world. How many times does a fighter get three chances to do something right, once? It's recently been reported that David Tua is going to fight Hasim Rahman for a third time. Only this time it will be for the soon to be vacated WBA heavyweight title formerly held by Roy Jones. I know the way fighters, especially heavyweights, get recycled today and nothing is certain, but this most likely will be the last title shot for both of them. However, this is even more important for Tua since he has yet to win a piece of the title. This has to be considered his best chance, if not his last.

Currently, Tua is officially 1-0-1 vs Rahman. In reality he should be 1-1 vs Rahman, and if not for a left hook after the bell in their first fight, he could be 0-2. Is it possible that just maybe he and his corner will have figured out how to fight Rahman? Going by their track record, it doesn't look promising. In two fights between Tua and Rahman, Tua has been totally out-boxed by the most basic boxing technique and style in the book. Tua has been rendered totally ineffective by Rahman just jabbing and moving to his left away from Tua's big left hook. It's quite obvious that Tua has shown throughout his career that he has no defense for a jab; you can't miss him if you throw it. Tua has also shown that when confronted by movement, he has no answer.

Tua is as dangerous as any heavyweight in boxing if you back straight up against the ropes and stand there and try to fight him. Tua, being a tremendous two-handed puncher can really do damage under this scenario. The problem is, no top heavyweights are foolish enough to be caught in this position when fighting him.

I have said since first seeing Tua fight that he is blessed with two tremendous gifts that most heavyweights would give up ten years of their lives to have: dynamite in either hand and a concrete chin. These are traits that can't be learned. On the other hand, it seems Tua can't be taught what he needs to do to beat the fighters who beat him with the jab and movement. Lennox Lewis, Chris Byrd, and Rahman twice have totally befuddled him with the jab. In those four fights, Tua had yet to use any head and upper body movement. On top of this he has not learned how to cut off the ring, and the importance of it.

What Tua hasn't had embedded into his head yet, is that when you're a short heavyweight with a short reach, you have to get inside. He can't trade jabs with Rahman and expect to win or even compete. Short heavyweights must get inside to be effective. However, there is a way to go about getting inside that is no secret in boxing. The formula for it is: head and upper body movement, cutting off the ring and stepping in front of the opponent, and going to the body so you can come in low underneath the jab. This strategy has been proven to be more than effective. Tom Sharkey, Rocky Marciano, Joe Frazier, and even Mike Tyson in some of his early fights, proved this to be a winning strategy when fighting against fighters who box and use lateral movement.

Watching Rahman fight, I think it's safe to say that he doesn't move like Ali, or Holmes. For Tua to have a chance in this fight, he must emulate Frazier in his fights with Ali, especially the first.

David Tua: Will He Finally Get It Right ?

Written by Frank Lotierzo

Wednesday, 03 September 2003 18:00

In his first fight with Ali, Frazier forced Ali back by slipping his jab and cutting off the ring while going to the body while moving forward. Rahman doesn't have an exceptionally fast jab, and it certainly isn't hard enough to discourage Tua from pressuring him. Rahman's jab is decent, but it's not something Tua shouldn't be able to penetrate. The key is, his technique and strategy must be worked on and perfected during training camp.

For Tua to land any of his big punches, he must force Rahman into position so he can deliver the big hooks and overhand rights. He just can't follow Rahman around the ring eating jabs and expect to get in the one big shot to end the fight. He used this strategy in the previous two bouts with Rahman, and other than the left hook he connected with after the bell in the first fight, he hasn't landed enough big shots to end the fight.

In the upcoming third bout between Tua and Rahman, I expect Rahman to be in tremendous shape. In their last fight Rahman was in poor condition and came in very heavy which almost cost him the fight. Rahman will be very determined this time since he thinks he has beaten Tua twice, but hasn't a win on his record to show for it. Rahman doesn't have to change his strategy a bit for Tua. He knows that as long as he keeps his jab working, and his feet moving, Tua doesn't have an answer. Look for Rahman to fight the same as he has in the previous fights, only with more purpose.

For Tua to finally gain a piece of the elusive title for which he has clamored, it will take a career effort. To accomplish this he must get in great shape, weighing in the low 230's is a must. He must give Rahman head and upper body movement while closing the distance by stepping in front of him and cutting off the ring. Tua has to go to the body early to try and take Rahman's legs away, forcing him to fight flatfooted. And Tua must have a high punch out put, as it's imperative to be busy from bell to bell. This is his last chance to prove he's not just going to go down as a fighter who will be mentioned as one of the best to never win the title.