

## Bradley Better Not Think He's Hearn's

Written by Ron Borges  
Friday, 28 January 2011 17:13

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The Moment has come for Timothy Bradley and Devon Alexander, two guys who may be the best 140-pound fighters in the world. So now what?

Considering their skills and relative youth, this is not likely to be the last such moment in either of their careers but without question when they meet Saturday night inside the Pontiac Superdome it will be the biggest fight of their lives. How each approaches such a moment - and how each copes with the demands of it - will go a long way in deciding who survives it and advances, which is where my concerns for Bradley begin.

Although he is four years older than the 23-year-old Alexander and more battle tested by tougher opposition, Bradley has spent much of this week talking and sounding like someone who has forgotten the most important thing at a time like this – who he is.

On Wednesday Bradley spoke of having worked the mitts with Detroit legend Thomas Hearn's, a guy who wasn't called Hit Man for nothing. He said Hearn's kept telling him to turn over his right hand for more power and he suggested that is the approach he may take against his slick and quick southpaw opponent.

Bradley intends to come into the ring sporting the short shorts and high tube socks of Hearn's and his peers from the 1980s, Sugar Ray Leonard and Marvin Hagler, hinting he intends to be a throwback to another time.

If this is all just talk and fashion statement it's fine but if it is a reflection of how he actually intends to fight the undefeated Alexander (21-0, 13 KO) it is a mistake of monumental proportions because when The Moment comes the most important thing a fighter can do is remember who he is...and who he is not.

Timothy Bradley is undefeated himself (26-0) and with good reason but he has only 11 knockouts and that's with good reason too. He is not the kind of fighter who carries into the ring with him what promoter Don King would call "double shock power." He is no Hit Man, although he generally hits his man a lot.

Rather, Bradley is as methodical as a lumberjack and effective in the same way they are. He whacks away and whacks away and eventually cuts down his opponents, turning them over time into less than what they were when the fight began. To beat Alexander, who has lightning speed and fast hands, he must hew to that approach and not deviate.

If he can maintain his usual volume of punches and normal accuracy Bradley will be a formidable opponent for Alexander to deal with even though the speed advantage would seem to be in Alexander's corner. But if he really feels he needs to be a throwback to another era he will be throwing away the biggest fight of his life.

"I feel I'm a monster at 140 pounds," Bradley said. "I feel stronger than everybody. I think

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Alexander will be aggressive. I think he'll force the action. A lot of people feel he's going to box me but I just feel (he'll be the aggressor) and I'm ready for it. If he wants to slug it out let's go!"

First off, Devon Alexander didn't get to 21-0 by slugging it out with anyone. Although he may be a slightly more powerful puncher than Bradley neither has the kind of knockout punch that, say, rival Amir Khan carries with him. More importantly, Alexander is the kind of guy who hits you two or three times and then disappears, a fighter who wins with speed and elusiveness more than aggression.

So to assume Alexander is going to decide to "slug it out" is, in my mind, to prepare for the wrong kind of battle. Worse, it is one thing to work the mitts with Thomas Hearn's. It's quite another to think you HAVE the mitts of Thomas Hearn's.

"I love to take risks," Bradley said. "That's what this fight is all about. "

Although boxing is the ultimate risk business it is risk-reward ratio that is most important inside the ring. The winner will have unified half the outstanding world titles at 140 pounds and set themselves up as the No. 1 junior welterweight in the world, creating a potential monster payday against Khan, assuming Khan is willing to take a similar risk. But the fighter who puts himself in that position will be the one who best manages the pressure of the moment without losing himself, something Alexander has more experience with than Bradley.

Last August, Alexander faced former world champion and Olympic medalist Andriy Kotelnik in what was his biggest fight until now. Although he won a clear decision, Alexander did not box well and admitted this week he was overwhelmed by the moment and tried too hard to prove his superiority, paying a high price for it in the process.

"I got away from the plan," Alexander said. "I wanted to impress people too much."

Wanting to impress is a noble thing but it can't be achieved if one tries to be what they are not to do it. That is the fear Bradley supporters should have going into this fight.

In the end of course, it may all have been just talk. He may wear the short shorts and high socks of 30 years ago but still box like who he is, which if he does may very well lead him to the victory he so desperately wants.

But if Timothy Bradley really wants to achieve his goal he has to remember he is a fighter who works methodically, not concussively. He is a fighter who cuts you down a little at a time, breaking down your body and your defenses before finally breaking down your will.

He is not Thomas Hearn's even if he dresses like him. He is who he is. Even if he remembers who that is, this still will be a difficult fight but if he doesn't it will become an impossible fight to win.

"He can do whatever he comes to do," Alexander said. "I'm prepared to do it all. I believe in my ability."

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That's what Timothy Bradley has to do too. Not in the ability someone else was blessed with but in the ability he's been given. If he does he can win Saturday night but if he thinks he has to be someone other than the guy who won those other 26 fights that led to this moment, he's in for a big surprise...and a bigger heartbreak.

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### **FighterforJC says:**

Maybe by turning over his right hand more, Bradley will improve his KO ratio?

### **MisterLee says:**

Bradley, Ud. takes over the mid rounds on. Mister Lee via crow Sunday morning..

### **Radam G says:**

Tim Bradley is a New-Jack fighter who is PRIME green from not being properly taught or trained. As I've said, he needs a REAL trainer. Dude is 27 years old and doesn't yet know how to punch properly. Since when do you need to tell a fighter who been in the game 19 years -- counting the time in amateurs and pros -- to turn over his punches? As I've said like a broken record, Bradley is Gazoo -- totally a shorty green fairy-tale character who's wishy-washy. He can make a lot people luv him with his cartoonish tough-guy act. Sheeee! More power to him. Dude is already tight as a drum and psyched out. His motormouth has sold himself a delusion. Now the sucka is suffering from confusion. With all his New-Jack fighting style of tapping and slapping and swinging and winging, he may be just find himself on the canvas knocked out and delusionally dreaming about cuckoos circling around his noggin and singing. Alexander Da Great is light years above Bradley. All he has to do now is to get in that squared jungle, starting Mackin' and give Bradley a major shellackin.' Holla!

### **riverside says:**

Bradley ud, he is got more weapons, better quality of opposition and beter trainer, Cant hate the guy for being that good,Not too many guy's are going with Alexander.

### **admin says:**

I get worried when too many are on the same page. Too many leaning Bradley..maybe time to zag when others are zigging. Like int he stock market, when everyone's bullish, it's time to be a bear

### **brownsugar says:**

Oh,.. they're out there, the boxing fans picking Devon are out there in droves... there's

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multitudes of em'. they'll keep their mouths clamped shut until they reappear in the morning to say "I told ya so". ...Hey Riverside... I'm probably as close to Detroit as you were to the Areola fight... but road trips and winter just don't mix.

### **brownsugar says:**

hopefully TB won't give them to opportunity... either way I'm still glad for the winner.