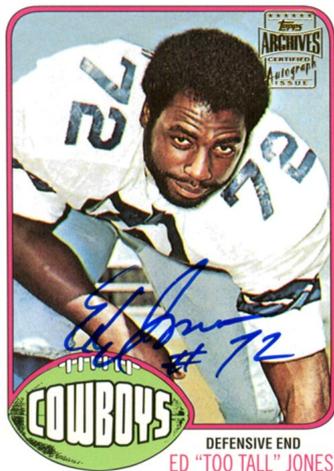


Another NFL Player Threatens To Take Up Boxing As A Second Career

Written by Frank Lotierzo

Thursday, 17 February 2011 11:56



Too Tall wasn't too skilled away from his area of expertise. He thought because he was big and bad he could rule the ring. The ring brought him down a peg. Same will go for Edwards, we're guessing. Alright, it's no secret that almost every man on the planet at one time or another has been involved in a fist-fight/street fight. Most guys did their share of brawling as middle-schoolers up through the time they graduated college or say age 23 or 24. It's funny how many guys look at pro fighters and say boxing, or MMA for that matter, isn't street fighting. And they say it like they're making a point. Really, boxing/MMA aren't street fighting? Of course they're not. They're combat sports with rules. What's funny is, a lot of boxers were led to boxing because they were good street fighters, and I'm sure that pertains to MMA as well.

Most professional athletes realize that they can't compete at the highest level in a different sport. You'll never hear Baltimore Ravens linebacker Ray Lewis even joke that he could cover Kobe Bryant in the open court. And you'd never hear Kobe Bryant say even on a bet that he could block Ray Lewis at the line of scrimmage. Yet for some reason there are some football, basketball and hockey players who think because they won a few street fights, they can go into boxing and have success. However, you never hear heavyweight fighters say they could be a starting power forward in the NBA or a starting linebacker in the NFL.

It was recently reported in the St. Paul Pioneer-Press that if the NFL imposes a lockout on players during the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) negotiations, Minnesota Vikings defensive end Ray Edwards says he will look to become a professional boxer and probably fight in April. Edwards has never actually fought in the ring, but says he's used a boxer's type workout to stay in shape and improve his hand usage to shed blocks. Which is night and day different than trying to deliver punches or shed them.

Edwards, 26, stands 6-5 and weighs 268 pounds. His size and bulk would, in actuality, be a drag on his in-the-ring effectiveness. He obviously believes that because he can perhaps make the focus mitts crack when he strikes them, he must be the next Earnie Shavers disguised as an NFL defensive end. It's almost mind boggling how some football players and body builders

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who never set foot into a ring foolishly think because they're big and have football or weight lifting strength, that they're a potential life taker in the manner of Sonny Liston and George Foreman. I guess if Edwards isn't dreaming of being anything but a novelty act, it's not the worst thing he can do. However, the potential is there for him to get chin-checked and embarrassed.

Only one former NFL player transitioned from football to professional boxing and had moderate success. That was Charlie Powell, who fought Muhammad Ali and finished with a career record of 25-11-3 (17). Powell played in the NFL for nine years and was a defensive lineman for the San Francisco 49ers and Oakland Raiders. Powell also fought and lost to Mike DeJohn and Floyd Patterson.

I guess Alonzo Highsmith would be next in terms of marginal success. And he fought as an amateur for a while before he was recruited by the Nebraska Cornhuskers. And he was much better proportioned physically to be a boxer than Ray Edwards, standing 6-1 and usually weighing between 225-235 pounds. Highsmith retired from boxing after four years with an impressive career record of 27-1-2 (23). Incidentally, the fighter with the most impressive record that he fought was former New York Jets defensive end Mark Gastineau, who was 15-1 when Highsmith TKO'd him 20 seconds into the second round. Two years after beating Gastineau (whose boxing career was nothing but a sideshow), Highsmith was stopped in his second to last fight by Terry Verner's 7-20-2 (5).

Who can forget Dallas Cowboys defensive end, Ed "Too Tall" Jones' excursion into the ring? Remember when he said he was going to knock out reigning heavyweight champ Larry Holmes a week before he made his pro-debut in 1979 versus Abraham "Jaqui" Meneses, all 5-6 of him? And "Too Tall" needed a standing 30 count against Meneses in the last round just so he could survive the round and win a decision. Jones smartly retired undefeated after six fights and went back to the NFL and played better than he ever had before.

The fact of the matter is, football, body building and wrestling strength doesn't translate into ring strength. Just as boxing strength doesn't translate into football or body building strength. Boxers salivate when football players and body builders or power lifters wander into the gym with the mindset they can handle boxers. In my experience, they usually tried to get in the ring with the fighters their size who didn't have an imposing physique. And then they get their clocked cleaned by a guy who wasn't even leaning on his punches or trying to show him up.

Boxing, and other combat sports take years to master. Just because you're a big NFL lineman doesn't mean you can punch or take a punch. History is replete with former NFL and NBA players trying to become serious boxers in their mid to late twenties. And recently only Alonzo Highsmith managed to achieve moderate success, and he boxed before he was a big time college or NFL player. Not to mention a majority of his fights looked like setups. In other words, fighters were possibly paid to come in and make him look good. I say Ray Edwards should heed the advice that Wilt Chamberlain's father gave him when he was going to be trained by Cus D'Amato to challenge Muhammad Ali back in 1967. It went something like, you'd be best served working on your foul shots than fighting Ali. And smartly Wilt changed his mind and didn't sign the contract to face Muhammad.

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As far as the case pertaining to Ray Edwards, it's plausible that if there's a work stoppage in the NFL this coming season, it'll be short lived. Therefore, he would be best served working on his stunts and bull rushes, they'll come in handy when the strike is settled by October 2011 at the latest.

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Radam G says:

Naku! Wow! F-Lo is being F-Lo and gettin' on his mega masterpiece. Dude scribbles like J-Lo's ya know what, haahahahaha! Fine, fine, fine! Yall kno' what tyme it is, Imfao! F-Lo is a 100 percent spot on about pro athletes inability to crossover into other pro sports that they have no experience in. Nonetheless -- as Charlie Powell did -- they could find some success if they had done the sport a few years as a child. With that said, it is the nature of sports to discourage athletic superstars from participating in too many sports, except while in high school on the U.S. mainland.

Charlie Powell -- Mr. Chuck is what I know him as from my kiddie days -- boxed, played American-style football, baseball, wrestled and ran track from age 12. He went right from playing all these sports in high school to being a teenage defensive end for the San Francisco 49ers. And while he played pro football, he fought as a professional boxer and even played semi-pro baseball. Mr. Chuck is/was one of the greatest least known muti-sport stars in history. Deion Sanders and Bo Williams probably couldn't wear his shoes. Bo knows a lot of things. But does he know that Mr. Chuck has BIG FEET and a mean punch? Hahahahaha! Holla!

Isaiah says:

Yeah, this is nothing new. A guy thinks because he's good in one sport that he'll just rule another, no problem. (Boxing in particular.) Bo Jackson thought he could do everything. Michael Jordan couldn't hit a homerun in minor league baseball if his life depended on it. NBA great Wilt Chamberlain was so sure he could whoop Muhammed Ali until Ali slapped him around a little bit on a street corner. Nothing to see here. Move along people.

FighterforJC says:

I beg to differ. How man pro football players have transitioned into boxing and failed? Now how many people, period, regardless of background, have tried their hands at pro boxing and failed? I don't keep count of football players trying out pro boxing, but let's just say there's been a dozen, maybe even a few dozen. Compare that to the THOUSANDS of non-football players who have failed just as miserably at pro boxing as these highly publicized pro football players have. Based on those figures and using the same logic, one could just as easily conclude that mcdonald's employees or skateboarders make lousy boxers. The issue has less to do with the

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fact that they're football players with non-boxing muscles and more to do with one's natural ability. A guy like Earnie Shavers needs just a little bit of guidance and training to harness that punching power, while a fighter like Marciano didn't have to train to get that cast iron chin. No amount of "chin-checking" would've knocked out Marciano early in his career. If you got it, you got it and if you don't, you don't. I can't think of too many fighters but a couple of guys come to mind who started boxing at an advanced age, like Ray Mercer, who at 27 years of age, was still fighting at the Olympics, and James Bonecrusher Smith. Regardless of their prior athletic endeavors, these guys achieved the highest prize in pro boxing--the heavyweight championship of the world. Going 12 rounds against a prime Tyson and losing by decision to a prime Larry Holmes isn't anything to laugh at. I'm not at all suggesting that Edwards or just anybody will be successful in boxing, but overall athleticism is one of the most difficult plateaus to reach before becoming a pro boxer. Any professional athlete has a level of fitness that are several notches above the average guy in the street who's putting on a pair of gloves for the very first time. There's nothing mystical about boxing, don't try to over-spiritualize it.

Radam G says:

AGAIN, Fo-L is a 100 percent SPOT ON! It is just about impossible for a pro from another pro to transform into a world-class boxer, PERIOD! There is no exception. Ray Mercier was a late, blooming boxer, not a pro from another sports. Starting late for heavies is nothing. But coming from another sport and doing da boxin' thang [sic], they can't cut da mustard, PERIOD! Jess Willard start boxing at 26 years old. Ken Norton started boxing in the U.S. Marine Corp. at 21 years old. Big John Tate started at 22 years old. Ron Lyle started at 27 years old. Rev. (Big) George Foreman started at 17 years old. Larry Holmes started at 19 years old. Mike Weaver started at 19 years old. Sonny Liston -- depending what his true age is -- started at 26 years or 32. I could keep naming heavies and a lot of other fighters in other weight divisions, like Paulie Malignaggi who started at 16 years old or Bob Foster -- depending on what his true age is -- started at 22 or 28 years old. The point is, is that these athletes were not in any other professional sports before coming into Whup-arse boxing.

Once again, Fo-L did not say that any athlete from other sports couldn't do it, he simply and righteously said that many have tried and didn't make it and many probably couldn't. Starting late in boxing is not a death sentence. But if you are in another professional sport and try to switch over to the sweet science, your arse is on a life machine, if not one foot already in the graveyard. Even C- boxers can whup an athlete from any other sports, including that MMA/UFC jive. Now that jive will win 95 percent of the time by its rules. But by boxing rules or street no rules, the combatants of that sport and any other fantasy-seeking jokers from other sports who want to challenge even a C- boxer have a severe arse whuppin' coming 99.9999 percent of the time. Boxing is serious whup-arse bitnezz! Boxing bullies are sitting in jail for killing or injuring people -- including those from the MMA/UFC and a few from pure martial arts -- on the streets. The Mafia recruits ex-boxers to do their dirty work. That is a fact, JACK! Check it out! Holla at a Police/FBI history SHACK or Youtube! I don't provide the path to knowledge to da arrogant. Holla!

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One last WORD! The key and thesis about F-Lo's masterpiece is about other pro athletes coming into another sport "Johnny come lately." Many skateboards and McDonald workers have come into the game and dominated. Even some cats even from the post offices, construction jobs and funeral homes. Maybe somebody oughta holla at weird occupations that boxers were in before coming to the sweet science. THC PacMan use to sell various kinds of Pinoy breads and worked as a construction laborers. There are cats in boxing who use to literally take care of and live in the tombs of rich families in the Middle East and South Asia, including the Philippines. Matter of fact, you can go on a tour of the "Chinese Cemetery" in Manila. [Holla at people living in and taking care of the tombs for the rich on YOUTUBE.] No one should miss what F-Lo was masterfully weaving. And nobody and dey momma can trip him up. He was a solid fighter, and nowadays, he is a super solid writer. Holla!

FighterforJC says:

Again, that's a nice theory and all and makes for some compelling, emotional argument that truly puts the sweet science on the pedestal that boxing fans feel it deserves to be. But until you can gather data from more than a handful of pro football players that have failed in boxing versus the thousands of non-football players, then there's no merit to it. My point is, the same football players who failed at boxing would've still failed even if they started boxing at a very young age and played no other sport. Has nothing to do with whether or not they played a different sport or started boxing late. They might've fared better because of more refined technique but they still would've sucked big time.

Radam G says:

Mythology is always possible despite the hard reality of the reality. And when you cannot find something, just say that the data doesn't exist. If I woulda and coulda been born on a Sunday -- instead of Saturday -- like my little bro, I would have grown to be six-foot-tall like him, instead of 5-foot-6 in actuality and 5-foot-7 officially and having played a year of American high school football at a listed 5-foot-10. In other words, one can say anything. There have been tons of ex-pro football players and baseball ones that crept into professional boxing and got da double fudge knocked out. And there is plenty of data. One just have to know where to look. I bet TSS scribes and other boxing scribes can find the data in a New York minute. The GOAT Ali didn't only fight one ex-pro football player. Mike Tyson kayoed an ex-pro football player who turned to pro boxing.

FYI, ex-football players don't just have a long history of going into wrestling when their football careers are over, AS LONG AS PRO FOOTBALL HAS BEEN AROUND, they have made sad, sad attempts at da sweet science pugilism. It is HIGHLY possible that one who isn't in the know doesn't know this, because of the long history of fighters having a born name that they walk around with and played football with versus a fight name that they get down with. To this very day, about 20 percent of boxers don't fight in their birth name. About 35 years ago, it was more than 50 percent of boxers who fought in ring names, and not birth/civilian/everyday ones.

By the way, Rocky Marciano -- not his birth name -- turned to boxing after failing to make it in major league baseball. I guess you didn't know that he played in the minor league. The pro

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basketball players and soccer ones -- with the exception of Sergio Marquez -- knows what time it is. They stay the heck away from the legal mayhem game. Sergio Marquez was that very rare exception to the rule. He is one of only about 15 pro-soccer players that can be documented in trying to holla at the sweet science. For a minute back in the day, Hersel Walker considered dropping pro football in crossing into boxing before a 45-year-old trial horse kayoed his arse in sparring. We live in the days of rapid, superquick info, so it is no excuse for one not to be able to found the skinny on da phat. Most things are never simple or what they appear to be. Boxing is the theatre of the unexpected. Don't be surprised who have sneaked around in this game and got KTFO. Holla!

brownsugar says:

Send them to see Dana White.

FighterforJC says:

I know that Radam G is against the ropes getting pummeled when he starts pulling his "in the know" card. When all else fails, resort to the "if you're in the know" statements. lol.

Radam G says:

Guarantee you that F-Lo knew the data before he scribbled it. Don't be fooled by a pro appearing to be "against the ropes getting pummeled." He may just be doing a rope-a-dope. Ya lost this one, FJC. It is all right! On some days, you cannot win with a bluffin' and huffin.' There are too many readers and scribes who know da skinny. Don't let your mind play trick on you. And don't be da dope getting roped into. Hahahahaha! Time to move on. Holla!

FighterforJC says:

Riiiiiiight.