Written by Frank Lotierzo
Monday, 21 February 2011 23:30

Recently reports have surfaced on Ring Magazine's web-site and on-line newspaper sites that former welterweight/middleweight title holder Paul Williams 39-2 (27) is possibly looking to return to the ring in late April. It's been a little over three months since Williams fought Sergio Martinez 46-2-2 (25) and was knocked out with one punch in the second round and lost his WBC middleweight title.

The fact that Williams is anxious to get back in the ring and face a live opponent as his management suggests, is a good sign. The only speculation seems to be at what weight Williams will fight. Apparently he can still make the welterweight limit and that's where the two biggest names in boxing, Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather, currently campaign. No doubt a fight with Pacquiao is much more realistic than one with Mayweather is, provided Williams doesn't encounter any setbacks in his next few bouts.

Right now the biggest obstacle in front of Williams, 29, is shaking off the psychological effects of the sudden and crushing knock out he suffered at the hands of Martinez. And regardless of what Paul says, he's asking himself questions he's never had to before after a fight. One of the hardest things for an upper-tier world class fighter to shed is a crippling knockout defeat, especially the first time it happens. And before getting to that, let's be clear about one thing, it was a lottery punch landed by Martinez that put Williams away. Martinez threw the knockout punch as blindly as Paul caught it. It wasn't an intentional, well timed punch. He was looking away when he threw it. But the fight wasn't going Paul's way at all. In fact, both fighters looked reckless and sloppy, and both of them leave their heads hanging out to be nailed.

As to how much the knockout loss will effect Williams in his future fights is something that not even he'll know until he fights again. Former undisputed welterweight champ Donald Curry was one of the top three pound-for-pound fighters in boxing back in 1986. Curry was an even more complete and dangerous fighter than Williams when he was stopped in the sixth round by the undefeated Lloyd Honeyghan and lost his undisputed welterweight title. Unfortunately for Curry, his career was never the same and he was stopped by almost every upper-tier fighter he faced after he was stopped by Honeyghan. In Curry's case, it became clear that he wasn't blessed with an all-world chin and once he lost his confidence on top of that, he fought with trepidation and doubt in his subsequent bouts and fought mostly in the role as a trial horse for the rest of his career. So that's one direction that Williams' career post Martinez can take.

The other direction Williams' career could go is the way in which Tommy Morrison and John Ruiz's careers went after suffering two of the most devastating knockout losses in boxing history. Morrison was destroying Ray Mercer in their WBO heavyweight title bout until he got caught and was brutally pounded along the ropes before referee Tony Perez stopped the fight. And who can forget the way the undefeated wrecking machine named David Tua blitzed future heavyweight title holder John Ruiz in 19 seconds of the first round? Ruiz was on the canvas and out without ever throwing a punch.

If ever two fighters showed more character than Morrison and Ruiz after suffering a devastating knockout defeat, I don't know their names. Both Morrison and Ruiz came right back and never once fought glove shy during any of their bouts. As it turned out, Morrison was stopped in later bouts, but that was more a case of his physical limitations and durability, not character or heart. In Ruiz's case, John fought 17 years after being demolished by Tua and wasn't stopped again until his last fight at age 38 against the hard punching David Haye. Ruiz will never be thought of as being a great fighter, but he possessed every bit the heart and character as past greats named Muhammad Ali and Marvin Hagler.

Paul Williams will be struggling within himself, especially in his next few fights, to try and convince himself that what happened against Sergio Martinez was a fluke and won't happen again. Prior to his rematch with Martinez, Williams was a go-for-broke fighter and was willing to take as good as he gave. That's just who he was. It remains to be seen if that's who he still is.

No one knows what the residue will be for Paul Williams mentally and psychologically the next time he gets into a firefight. It'll be very interesting to see if he fights measured and only looks to cut loose when he feels it's safe from this point on. It may take a fight or two for him to gain his confidence back. But one thing's for sure, it's not a given that he'll ever be the same fighter he was before he was knocked out by Sergio Martinez. My guess is he'll still be the same fighter he was, but that remains to be seen. And if he is, he's a rare breed.

I'm still not sure that even the most sophisticated boxing aficionados fully understand how hard and rare it is for fighters to come right back after suffering the type of knockout defeat Paul Williams suffered. The best example I can give is to equate it to stepping off the curb and being slammed by a car. How long would it take you to confidently cross a heavily trafficked street again?

**Frank Lotierzo can be contacted at GlovedFist@Gmail.com**

Comment on this article

**Radam G says:**

Long Tall Paul Williams will be fine. He's the type of pugilist who believes that Sergio Martinez hit him with "a lucky shot" so that doesn't count. Besides there is a long history of fighters recovering after devastating kayos -- just like the history exists that many don't and won't. The brother of Don Curry, Bruce came back after badly getting kayoed three times to win a won title.

Tommy Hearns kayoed him in three rounds. Four fights later, he was kayoed with "a lucky punch" by a tomato can. Then five fights later, he was kayoed by Steve Hearon. Then four and five bouts later, he upset leading contenders Ronnie Shields and Tyrone Rackley. He then won the WBC lightwelter belt.

Terry Norris was not affected by getting kayoed by Julian Jackson. He bounced right back four bouts later and kayoed John Mugabi for the WBC light middleweight title belt. After defending the title about 10, including wins over faded Sugar Ray Leonard, Don Curry and primed Maurice Blocker, he got kayoed by Simon Brown, then bounced back to regain his title from Brown two bouts later.

We all know how the "Brown Bomber" Joe Louis bounced back after getting kayoed by Max Schmeling. And what about how Lennox Lewis had no affects from getting kayoed by Hisham Rahman. Last, but not least, Roberto Duran bounced back from getting tore up by Tommy Hearns. Paul Williams will be fighting with full steam again. Expect that until his arse is kayoed again. Fighters need the killer instinct. This we know. But having solid delusional instinct gives a lot courage and blind them from conceiving or accepting defeat. LTP doesn't believe that Sergion Martinez can beat him with anything but with "a lucky punch." It doesn't matter is this is true or not. It matters only that the psyche and strong mind of LTP is not hindered. He has no fright or psychological problems and will be ready, loaded and locked with the same old style and believing that he can still fight. If he ever could. Sorry! But he could not in my 20-5 eye vision. Holla!

**FighterforJC says:**

Unfortunately for Williams, he's not nearly as gifted as Terry Norris. It's one thing to be knocked out by Julian Jackson, it's another thing to be knocked out by Sergio Martinez. I really, really wanted Paul Williams to succeed for the sake of boxing. He's exciting to watch and a few years ago he seemed full of potential. But that potential never came into fruition. If he was 24 years old making these stupid mistakes it would be understandable. But he's at his absolute peak and this is the best he could do. As it turns out, his main asset is his size, his biggest talent his ability to cut down to welterweight. He has looked extremely average against foes north of the welterweight division with the lone exception of Winky Wright. But Williams has no power and he doesn't know how to fight like a "slick African American." He's not a thinker, he gives away all his advantages. And as a middleweight, those advantages aren't as dramatic as they were at welterweight, making him even more average.

I commend him for wanting to get back in the ring right away. That's what fighters are supposed to do. Williams is not a terrible fighter but he will never be a great one, either. He'll have his moments down the road and we might still see some classic stuff from Williams if he gets matched up with a James Kirkland or possibly even Saul Alvarez, but greatness is out of his reach forever.

**MisterLee says:**

I disagree F-lo writa'! He was landing that punch all night, prolly from studying tape. He hit

williams with it half a dozen times, and he wasn't looking away, he was simply slipping the left hand from williams that was coming his way, no less than Donaire was looking away when he rolled with Montiel's money punch, and came with his own. I also think Williams needs to do what he needs to win, fight with the head and use his tools, not just his heart, which will get him KOTFO further in the future. I think Martinez beats him 9 out of 10 times, partly b/c Martinez knows what works for him, and partly b/c Martinez fights smarter in the ring. Holler!

**Coxs Corner says:**

Donald Curry was one of my favorite fighters of the 80's he had great ability, superb fundamentals; elbows in, chin down, a master at blocking punches and counterinig and also possessed speed and explosive power. A good lesson that physical and mental toughness is just as much a part of the game as natural ability and skills.

**CharlotteYasinb says:**

I simply passed this onto a colleague who was doing a little analysis on that

**Jedeskylove says:**

Hey people! Cool forum! I've found so much great advice here.

**Matthew says:**

Great to have Frank back in the mix...I missed his columns. I think a more appropriate Donald Curry comparison would be the devastating kayo he suffered at the hands of Mike McCallum. He was NEVER the same after that, although he did win a belt at 154. I think Williams will have an easier time coming back from this kayo than he would if he had taken a sustained beating. Freddie Roach has often said (in reference to Amir Khan) that it's better psychologically to get knocked out early than to take a beating (see Miguel Cotto). Although it was a sensational knockout, I think Frank is spot-on in saying that Martinez landed a lucky punch. It wasn't even in the same technical ballpark as the one Donaire scored over the weekend. I'm more interested to see if Williams corrects the mistakes that he has made repeatedly (dropping his right hand, leaving his chin up too high, giving up his height and reach advantages). If you recall, he was getting hit by left hands over and over by Quintana in their first fight. If he's able to correct those flaws, he is still young enough to be a major player, but he needs to fight more than twice a year. On another note, Ruiz fought on for 14 years after getting taken out by Tua, not 17 as Frank stated in the article.

**Radam G says:**

B-Hop is always starting jive. Dude could influence a snake. Maybe he should be known as the influencer, instead of the "Executioner." Dude was jiving and conniving about that nonsense of a "slick African American" style of fighting. [He is a student of the game.] In the whole history of boxing -- especially the filming version -- one can go and watch and see that 75 percent of boxers don't fight in that style. And ninety percent of them are African Americans. None of the

African American Joes -- Joe Frazier, Joe Louis or Joe Brown -- fought that way. Now maybe a Jersey Joe did. When you go to the Floyds, Floyd Patterson didn't fight that way. Maybe a Terrible Terry Norris fought that way, but not a Terrible Tim Whiterspoon. Mavelous Marvin Hagler didn't fight that way. But Mavelous Marvin Sonsona of the Philippines does. Don Curry didn't fight that way. But Nonito Donairey Jr from the Philippines does. Because moving side to side, in and out, feinting, holding your hands out with the palms facing toward downard instead upward -- as in the original Queenberry's Rules style -- came straight out of the southern Philippines, as did the side hooking, uppercutting and bolo throwing.

Editor Mike, you should really get one of your crack boxing scribes to do some serious copy about the Pinoys' contributions to the styles of the legal mayhem game. Obviously because Pinoys are HOT now. And haters are confused, or misinformed, or just lame without game. Then again some peeps are just plain pantophobic or seriously epistemophobic. See if they have these phobias, they can always manufacture and jive and connive. One thing that you must admit, we lost a lot of readers because they may just be plain old cenophobic. Knowledge may be old as sand, but it is brand-spanking new to those who are not in the know. Holla!

**the Roast says:**

Hey!! New people in the U? I gotta go check the hair and breath. Probably should put on some pants too...I'll be back!

**Radam G says:**

@the Roast, your Superman-like stand in that white t-shirt and bluejeans is bringing the newbies running. They are following da LIGHT. Hehehehe! You were probably the dude that was raising sand when I was doing the beatdown on a Chicagoian during an international tournament there back in 1988. Holla!

**the Roast says:**

@Radam, '88, raising sand? Yep that was me!

**Radam G says:**

Hehehehehehehehe! Holla!

**admin says:**

I'm with you...I cannot dismiss such a punch from a skilled pugilist as "lucky."

**mortcola says:**

I can't get behind the canonization of Martinez. Let me say at the outset that I have been a fan of his for a few years. He's a gifted guy. But yes, that KO was a lottery punch. Not that he wasn't prepping to counter neatly and capitalize on Williams' habits. But Martinez could throw a

thousand more like that, and maybe one would have the leverage, timing, and result of that single punch. It was a freak KO, a perfect storm of a punch. Martinez slickly outboxed Pavlik for part of the fight; was falling into trap after trap for several rounds until Kelly's eyes shut, despite the dramatic difference in speed, and ETOH levels. Even now, Martinez could fight Williams ten times, and I would predict he would take 7 of 'em. Just a guess, of course. But the guy, as quick and slick as he is, doesn't have the power, versatility, or natural boxing instinct of the greats. He is a gifted athlete who has learned boxing well, though at an advanced age. That is enough to make him a top player. But until he shows over the course of a few more fights that the Williams KO represents a quantum step up in mastery and superiority, I can't get behind the adulation. Admiration, sure. Fine fighter. But right now the high praise is hyperbole

**brownsugar says:**

Mister Lee is correct....there was nothing accidental about that punch...slow it down and looks more intentional than a scene from "The Matrix" or "Spiderman3"... Martinez is in the zone,...he delivers the killer blow while simultaneously eyeballing the incoming punch from Williams and moving his head out of the way.

**FighterforJC says:**

Martinez is a desperate clown who doesn't know what to do with himself. Father Time is knocking at his door and he's trying to figure out the best way to market himself and for people to pay attention. First and mandatory step is to either call out/belittle/insult Pacquiao which his team has already done. Second is to smooch Mayweather to convince him that he's a chump just looking for a payday.

**Radam G says:**

I'm absolutely no FAN of Martinez. But I'm with MisterLee and 2010 TSSU ROTY B-Sug. Martinez knocked the superhyped B+ fighter Long Tall Paul Williams straight out with a perfect planned shot. Call it what you like, but it still counts. Any boxing dude wish that he had that lotto shot, because its odds are better than any lotto or lightning in the world. Martinez is not great, but he's aight! And 2010 was his lucky friend. For him, 2011 will be no heaven. He won FOTY by kayoing the media-created most avoided fighter on the planet. But the truth was every boxing bodeee and dey mommas were hoping that LTP would holla at them for a dance. But it was no way that poppycock HBO was going to report that.

IMHO the bottomline is that Sergio Marquez appears to be supersharp because he whupped the media-superhyped bum LTP and the drunk Kelly Pavlik. KP is my boy, and a sober him would murda' da bum LTP and Martinez in the same night. The copy is about LTP being able to come back. Sorry about my diversion. Again, YUP LTP will be able to recover, because he is a fan of his hype, and honestly believe the nonsense about "lucky punch." Not too long ago, Jermain Taylor was believing in lucky punches knocking his arse out. Hehehehehehehe! In the end, he saw -- or is that felt -- the pain of everybodeee and dey mommas hitting his arse with da "lucky punch" and the lotto one, too." Holla!

**mortcola says:**

Are you kidding? What do you base an insult like that on? Guys a top, hard working pro who's risen to the top.

As for "The Punch"...yes, it was a beaut. But, I repeat, 999 out of a thousand times he throws that shot, it is just a slick counterpunch without brain-altering impact, like thousands he has thrown before. I guarantee - Martinez will look good for a few more years, but that shot will be the pinnacle, and the rest is anti-climax.

As for Williams, I sense that his strength is his weakness. He is very steadfast. Not easily shaken up, not easily inspired. Why he plateau'd with that high-volume, physically imposing but swiss-cheese style. If I'm right, and he doesn't get gun-shy, or, worse, simply can't take it anymore physically, then he goes right back to where he was. And if he gets a new trainer - just like Pavlik needs a new trainer, then maybe its not too late to refine those skills and make him the world-beater a lot of people thought he was.

**mortcola says:**

The "insult" I refer to is FighterforJC calling Martinez a desperate clown.

**FighterforJC says:**

Martinez is desperate because he knows he's not getting any younger. The guy has never been a dominating fighter which is why he's always been perceived as an opponent. He fights hard, has some above average boxing skills and he's game. He's a clown because he knows no other way of getting attention besides insulting Pacquiao. But then again, maybe it's genius because mentioning the name of Pacquiao instantly puts you in the headlines. But Martinez is nothing special, he's not a "fraud" or anything of the sort, but he is a one-hit wonder whose fame i based on a victory against the overrated Paul Williams, who has not looked impressive since his fight with Wright.