BERNARD HOPKINS CELEBRATES AND REMEMBERS

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF HISTORIC, PATRIOTIC

TRIUMPH OVER FELIX TRINIDAD

Philadelphia, PA (Sept. 9)...As we mark the 10th anniversary of September 11, 2001 and the tragic occurrence that happened, we must remember that the first major sporting event held in the borough of Manhattan following the tragedy was the middleweight championship fight between Bernard Hopkins and Felix Trinidad. It was a night that helped return boxing and sports fans to a sense of normalcy and that propelled Hopkins to a new level of superstardom.

It's hard to believe 10 years have passed since that battle at Madison Square Garden that ended with an upset knockout and chants of "U-S-A! U-S-A!". And it's every bit as hard now to believe that Hopkins was thought, at age 36, to already be an "old" fighter. Now the light heavyweight champion of the world at age 46, Hopkins is still making history, just as he did in handing the great "Tito" Trinidad his first loss that night.

The Trinidad fight was originally scheduled for September 15, 2001, so Hopkins was already in New York on that fateful day that changed our world.

"Ten years ago on September 11," Hopkins remembers, "I was running early that morning in Central Park. The next thing I know people were hollering that a plane had crashed into the tower. Everything changed after that."

Hopkins' grief on a human level was mixed with uncertainty on a professional level. He was unsure whether the fight would happen and, if so, when? He headed home to Philadelphia to feel safer and be closer to his family. He also set-up camp in downtown Philly and kept training, staying in is fight mindset despite the emotions swirling around him.

"Once I heard the fight would take place on September 29, I stayed in Philadelphia as long as I could," Hopkins recalls. "Riding back and getting closer to New York, I felt different. There was still an unsettled and eerie feeling that we were going to fight. I just had to block that out of my mind and stay focused on being ready for one of the biggest opportunities of my career.

Hopkins continued, "The Trinidad fight was important for many reasons. It was for the unification of the middleweight championship. But it became much bigger after 9/11. By having the fight two weeks later on the 29th, I think we were sending a message, through the fight, that America would not be bullied around and we have a resolve that is unmatched by any other country in the world. I remember the politicians and leaders saying that we should show our strength and keep living our lives. I think the fight helped people start that process.

"I remember being in the arena that night and seeing the service people of New York, the policemen and firemen, who we dedicated the fight to. I felt that responsibility of

representing our country, fighting as hard as I could, and most importantly, capturing the undisputed middleweight championship of the world. The fact that this fight is now part of my story makes me feel proud of what I have accomplished. I believe my story is a true American story. I will never forget that experience as long as I live."

That victory made Hopkins the undisputed middleweight champion and he went on to break the records for longest reign and most successful defenses at 160 pounds. A decade later, Hopkins is in the midst of his second reign as 175-pound king, preparing for a demanding defense against top contender "Bad" Chad Dawson on October 15 at STAPLES Center in Los Angeles and will be produced and distributed live by HBO Pay-Per-View®.

The world has changed in countless ways since the events of September 11, 2001. But one thing that hasn't changed, amazingly, is the "world champion" status of the living legend Bernard Hopkins.

Comment on this article

SALT_LOVER25 says:

Oh, man I remember that fight very much, and also the tragedy that occured before.

I remember I was in high school on that fateful Tuesday when the news started to spread. By that time Tito Trinidad has a demi-god here on the island. Everyone was already talking and

getting hyped for the Middleweight Championship fight, which was the finale of a four men, two fight tournament Don King set up at 160lbs. The original plan was to make Felix Trinidad, who had the eyes of the whole World, the winner of that tournament, and then have him move to 175lbs for a mega-fight with the then monstrous Roy Jones Jr. That was supposed to be the next step of the plan, until B-Hop stepped in!

After both men disposing their opponents [Keith Holmes and Williams Joppy], they were supposed to fight on September 15th, which is my birthday, but was postponed for the 29th.

Even though I'm Puerto Rican, and Hopkins made that dirty stunt of throwing the flag to the ground, still, I was pulling for him to get the Victory, and boy how did he. He outboxed and outsmarted a strong devastating KO artist [who entered the ring in a disrespectful way considering the feeling that was strongly in the air around that time] in front of a mass crowd in New York City. That jab had Trinidad off balance, and the foot-work messed up Tito's coordination in the ring. He wasn't even cutting off the ring, he was all following Hopkins trail the amateur way. The left hook was completely neutralized, and Hopkins feints were messing him up. Nazim Richardson, and Bouie Fisher both were in Hopkins corner, and having those two do helped a whole lot....a whole, WHOLE lot.

There was not way Trinidad was to beat Hopkins. He and his team meantioned after that fight, and Tito also in recent years, about how the events in 9/11 affected him, but that's just nonsense talk. As much as I respect Trinidad, he lost because there was a more prepared, and better boxer in front of him that night. A True legend in all the sense.

Congrats to Hopkins on the 10th anniversary of this great Victory for his career, and for boxing. And for America too. Showing to the World that it's still strong, and will not succumb to foreign cheap, and viled attacks. They will be avenged.

Waiting to see Hopkins next fight, though I'm pulling for the other guy this time, 'Bad' Chad Dawson.