

The Irony Of One Punch...LOTIERZO

Written by Frank Lotierzo

Monday, 03 October 2011 14:45



Recently former junior welterweight title holder Ricky Hatton was quoted saying that he went into a depression and considered suicide while trying to come to grips with his loss to Manny Pacquiao in May of 2009. Since being devastated by Pacquiao in the second round Hatton hasn't fought.

Sports writers, broadcasters and coaches repeat how the NFL is a game of inches and how one or two plays usually determine the outcome of the game. In boxing one punch can not only be the difference between winning and losing, but it can also make one fighters' career and ruin the others,' and that's not even considering if one fighter sustains a serious injury or in the worst case scenario is killed. When Manny Pacquiao caught Ricky Hatton with an over-hand left on the chin that was heard around the boxing world, it launched one career and ended another.

Prior to fighting Pacquiao, Hatton was thought of as being one of boxing's most popular and exciting fighters. If you remember, Hatton and Pacquiao shared equal billing and purse parity for their marquee match up two years ago. At that time, despite his popularity, no one was

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predicting Pacquiao would go onto claim titles at 140,147 and 154. Until Pacquiao crushed Hatton, Floyd Mayweather was considered boxing's top fighter and draw. As a matter of fact the attention Pacquiao garnered for fighting Hatton actually provoked a jealous Mayweather to announce he was ending his retirement on the day of Pacquiao-Hatton. So with one herculean punch, Pacquiao went from being one of boxing's most exciting fighters to the most talked about and comprehensively covered fighter in all of combat sports.

As for Hatton, who was on the receiving end of the punch heard around the boxing world, he's been inactive and went through a period of gorging himself with food, alcohol and drugs. Hatton told BBC radio the loss brought on thoughts of retirement and said, "I didn't cope with it very well ... I was so down, I was crying and breaking out and contemplating suicide."

I doubt many if any boxing fans thought the loss would be so traumatic and difficult for Hatton to deal with. After all, he seemed OK after the fight and publicly gave Pacquiao his due for his performance that night. The problem is that once he was by himself and thought about how fighters that get beat in such a devastating fashion are mocked, it must have cut at him inside and messed with him psychologically.

Obviously Hatton's over-indulgence was part of his way of coping with the result of the fight. And the fact that he got so far out of shape made it easier for him to forget about getting back in the ring. Once he was done drowning his depression he lost the weight and is reportedly in pretty good shape. However, when he thinks about all the time and work he put into boxing for him to be part of a big event like his fight with Pacquiao was, it's hard to put yourself through the rigors again that it takes mentally and physically to get back there. But when you get destroyed the way Ricky did, it makes you question yourself and your ability like you never have before. It causes you to remember everything negative that was said about or to you on the way up and how you didn't have what it takes. You forget about all the beatings you gave out and asses you kicked to make it to the top of the profession. All you can think about is how embarrassed you were on the big stage in your last fight, not to mention how hard it will be to get back to where you were and of course there are no guarantees that you will.

Fans never see how a loss effects a fighter afterwards. Losing a close fight is tough enough, but when you're embarrassed it really takes a lot to put it behind you and move on. Hatton was stopped by Mayweather before he fought Pacquiao. But it was in the tenth round and he was competitive and actually led early in the fight. Then he got caught, something that's happened to almost every fighter who has ever laced 'em up. Hatton had no trouble putting the Mayweather defeat behind him because he wasn't embarrassed and for a while looked as though he belonged in the same ring with Mayweather.

Had Ricky Hatton been competitive with Pacquiao before getting drilled by him, he'd probably still be an active fighter instead of a promoter. Sometimes a one-punch knockout defeat will take the will out of a fighter and he'll decide he gave it his all and will move onto the next phase of his life the way Hatton has done. And then there are some fighters like Paul Williams who despite suffering a devastating one punch knockout defeat to Sergio Martinez, can just brush it off as being a fluke and press on as if it never happened.

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In our current marketing era, a fighter's entire worth as a man can be changed by one loss, let alone a one shot kayo loss. During previous eras, when fighters had much longer careers, nearly every fighter--the all-timers included--had an uncharacteristic kayo loss on their records. Yet, they rebounded and achieved greatness in many cases.

Some will call Hatton a quitter for not continuing to fight, yet those are the same people who consider Williams a dope for wanting to continue. However, fighting is not something that anyone can be forced to do and why hopefully 99% of all fighters do it for themselves because nobody said it would be easy. Every fighter is one punch away from being a bum or the next all-time great.

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brownsugar says:

Man.... Hatton was my dude..."There's only one Ricky Hatton"

.... still is to a degree. He was Tenacious,.. Relentless,.. Insatiable,... and most of all... he was a Dirty SOB... Hatton would foul you and not even apologize unless it was flagrant. Too bad he didn't recognize that the seemingly mild mannered Pacman was a ruthless assassin in disguise who could hurl his whole bodyweight behind a punch if the target was too stationary for a split second too long.

And that's all she wrote...

But this isn't the 50's where boxers could barely talk without sounding like they drank a keg of Guinness single handedly. Many more options are available for those who reach the pinnacle of the sport.. And Hatton earned his rewards...via the hardest way possible.

Radam G says:

Ricky was aight! That is, as a pugilist. But more Redcoat great hype than great fight. Depression is what sits in when a heavily hype fighter is exposed. Wanting to commit suicide is a serious thing, and is nothing to play with. But beaten pugilistic hypes always talk about suicide, but never carry it out. Boxing has a lower suicide rate of its combatants than any other sport. A lost fighter talk and think about suicide, but few are ever 'BOUT! BOUT!

Right off the top of my head, I know about 45 fighters -- 10 super elites -- who spoke of suicide after losing and depression from losing. Holla!