

Taylor vs. Joppy: No Break in Tradition

Written by Frank Lotierzo

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In his fight this past weekend, former Olympian Jermain Taylor won a 12 round unanimous decision over former middleweight titleholder William Joppy. Taylor won 35 minutes out of a scheduled 36 minute fight, improving his record to 22-0 (16 KOs).

The Taylor-Joppy fight was nothing more than just that: a fight. One fighter, Taylor, has his best days in front of him. The other fighter, Joppy, has his best days behind him. Once Joppy realized that he couldn't win, which was about midway through the first round, he fought just enough to survive and keep Taylor from knocking him out - just as he did in his last fight with middleweight champ Bernard Hopkins.

As stated in this space before the fight, Taylor was in a no-win situation. If he beat Joppy in a round or two, Joppy was nothing but an old shot former champ hanging on for one last payday. And if he struggled versus Joppy, than how good can Taylor really be? Neither scenario unfolded and Joppy never really tested Taylor once in 12 rounds. So whatever questions anyone had about Taylor before the fight are probably still unanswered.

Taylor showed poise by not going recklessly after Joppy and punching himself out when he appeared to have him hurt. Taylor was very professional and took whatever Joppy gave him during the fight, indicating his growth in becoming a world-class fighter. If Joppy exposed his body and covered his head, Taylor unloaded with some terrific body punches. And if Joppy tried to lure Taylor to go up top so he could counter, Taylor did so by varying his attack. When Joppy thought the hook was coming, Taylor threw his uppercut. When Joppy wanted and expected Taylor to throw his right, he hooked off his jab and scored. Throughout the fight Taylor was always a step ahead of Joppy, either beating him with his speed or - sensing Joppy's predicament - anticipating his options and taking them away.

Did we really learn anything about Jermain Taylor in his fight with William Joppy that we didn't know before the first round? Probably not, unless you weren't aware of his versatile jab and hand speed. It was a pretty safe bet before the fight that Taylor could be counted on to play a major roll in the middleweight title picture in the very near future.

After the fight, Taylor's promoter Lou DiBella - the guy that proclaims he's not a manager or a promoter, but has his hands in everything - said Jermaine is ready to fight Hopkins or Trinidad in his next fight. That will not happen and DiBella knows it. DiBella can challenge Hopkins and Trinidad as much as he wants in the media on Taylor's behalf, because it brings attention to his fighter, but the fight's not happening, at least not in the next few months as he stated.

DiBella is no fool and knows that it's not quite time for him to risk his fighter against either Hopkins or Trinidad. Regardless of what he says. There is still a very good chance that Taylor could endure a beating from either one of them and might not recover emotionally. No, DiBella will wait another year for Hopkins and Trinidad to age and erode a little bit more before taking the risk with his fighter.

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And the tradition continues.