

Danny Williams: Self Help Contender

Written by Patrick Kehoe
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Danny Williams, Mike Tyson sweepstakes victor and career underachiever, has been trying all week to look the part of the next big some-body, reformed heavyweight on a mission, destiny's child or just a guy who's learned life's essential lesson in the nick of time.

Apparently, Danny Williams has unlocked the monster within, has proven to himself he deserves the fortuitous happenstance his boxing career has become, after his demolition of the sacred ruins of the Temple of Iron Mike, July 30, Louisville Kentucky. At least that's the standard refrain for public - journalistic - consumption from old Danny Boy. It seems the "Brixton Block" for too long wallowed in his own intemperate anxieties. "I used too much energy waiting for the fights," he now confesses to assert, "in the fight game you have to be ready for any eventuality."

Such as getting mightily out of ones own way?

How the past recedes into comical perspective, once you've leveled a giant, especially thee bad boy legend of his generation. Of course, knocking out Tyson in the fourth, after withstanding an early shelling, represents a kind of short hand description ripe for invention. Williams KO4 Tyson. An aged Tyson, a mentally fractured Tyson, none of that really matters in the bottom line ethic of prize fighting: survive to sell yourself again. So, Williams did blast out Tyson, proving in some measure that having 27 knockouts in 32 professional wins can suggest merit, can make instantly marketable those of flawed talents and inconstant virtue. Just make sure you are coming off a decent win, that's mostly what promoters want to sell. Fighters being product, product of perishable value of the commodified moment.

And to be sure, there's a touch of opportunism to Danny Williams, as he gets ready to face off against WBC heavyweight champion Vitaly Klitschko on Saturday night, on an HBO pay per view event, no less. For many who follow the fight game, there's something of 'the con' about this match up. Understanding that, when it comes to the sports entertainment industry, nothing diminishes one's undistinguished past like the felling of a legend. Suddenly, all that was unrealized potential buffs up as the sharp, leading edge of righteous redress.

I am NOT my losses, the mass calculus of my poignant failures. I am IN FACT what I never quite proved - to myself - to the world to be, that which I should always have been: a winner. By design and fortune, I am now myself, fully realized via the talent and discipline of my surest conviction.

One remembers or may upon referral know, Williams was a distant second best not only to the regard others had for his potential self as a boxer. He who is now one defining win away from the da facto heavyweight thrown, the guy brimming with resolve was second best off dismal performances against the living comic strip Julius Francis and the big bad wolf Sinan Samil Sam. Even the less than seminal figure of Michael Sprott, the bald brooding one whom Williams had stopped in February, 2002, took a points win off of Williams, in January of 2004!

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No wonder Williams and his team are fielding questions about his desire reborn, defining and defending his restitution as a contender, spelling out terms of self-confidence. With Williams it's never been about the talent; it was all about the head, those critical six inches between the ears. Interesting parallel to his opponent, Dr. Klitschko, who himself had to field questions about his heart and desire after his shoulder injury retirement bailout against Chris Byrd. Admittedly, the head is not the heart.

The signals are mixed heading into this fight, this pay per view encounter of opposites. Odds makers are not convinced as to Williams' viability. Klitschko may be distracted by the political melodramatics in Kiev, but he's still the best heavyweight of the moment, supposedly. The man trains for his fights. He's dedicated to remaining champion. Williams doesn't want to comment on whether or not his foe is distracted. He knows enough about maximizing outcomes to keep his mind's eye on a perfect version of Vitaly Klitschko. You line up the 1998 version of Mike Tyson to knockdown the husk of him in 2004. Same goes for 6'7" Ukrainian robots with boxing gloves.

Doesn't matter if HBO are selling myths or dreams or improbabilities as first rate fare. Lists of predictions are only moderately informed, hypothetical guesses. Beating Klitschko has nothing to do with amateur pedigrees or most distinguished wins in a career. At least that's what Williams has learned about how he takes apart expectation.

"Hard punching him everywhere," is the apt Williams phrase that comes out as if tipping his fight plan. No less a confidant than Lennox Lewis has suggested hitting the Klitschko body or ripping open that surgically repaired left eye brow. Then Williams invokes Doris Day to explain the Danny Williams it will take to win. Himself, coming into the ring relaxed and ready for what ever. And "what will be, will be."

First you have to believe yourself. Then your actions might make believers of those of casual disregard.