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I may be completely off my rocker, or partially influenced by a coffee buzz so strong it can illicit more creative thoughts than "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" did for our forefathers, but instead of the occasional banter about extending championship fights to 15 rounds as was the case in the past, wouldn't we see more exciting and therefore better fights if they fought fewer rounds? At the heavyweight level we would.

At least until a 6'5" 250-pound long-distance runner wins a marathon you are going to have a hard time convincing me that bigger is better when it comes to anything long-distance, whether that distance is timed or linear. Professional championship fights are slated for twelve rounds and when you have the 'new generation' of super-sized heavyweights throwing arm punches at each other for 36-minutes, it can sometimes take the sweetness out of the science of boxing and leave fans sour.

In bouts today it often seems as if fighters are doing what they can early and then saving themselves and their energy to survive until the late rounds by filling us with punch-and-hold dances for the middle 4-8 rounds of a fight. If there were fewer rounds and heavyweight boxers didn't have to first concern themselves with having to maintain the staying power to go the distance, they surely would be more likely to let it all hang out for a greater portion of the bout.

Those who do try to give it all they have in every round are often gassed by the seventh round and hit survival mode to close the show. As they tire their punching power also diminishes and as that fades so does the excitement level of the entire fight. 6' 6" Jameel 'Big Time' McCline lugged his massive 270-pound frame around the Madison Square Garden ring for 12 rounds recently against 6' 0 214-pound Chris Byrd in a case that proves the point.

McCline dominated the November 13th fight in the early going and even had Byrd knocked down in the second round. By the sixth stanza the 6-furlong sprint had materialized into a 1.5-mile derby and Byrd ran away with the victory. Byrd had more energy in the second half of the fight and boxed his way to a split-decision win.

While I have a ton of respect for Chris Byrd and his boxing ability, it would be inappropriate not to mention that he is a fighter many people do not enjoy watching at the heavyweight level. He isn't a big, strong, knockout puncher, but rather a slick, moving, aesthetically pleasing boxer. When guys go into the ring qualifying as a 'heavyweight', fans want to see big men hitting each other hard. What you get with Byrd is a smaller guy not hitting hard, but punching effectively, showing stylish footwork and tight defense. What you get with many heavyweights these days is a lot of clutching and grabbing after the first minute of each round.

Before the fight with McCline, Byrd was asked about how he was received in the heavyweight division. His response was that "Most boxing fans don't understand the sport. They just want to see brawls and knockouts." He was right, and suddenly this crazy notion of less being more may not be so off the mark after all.

As go the heavyweights so goes the popularity of boxing, or so “they” say. While I am not sure who “they” are, nor that they are correct, it is undeniable that exciting heavyweight bouts are not all that common.

On the same card as the aforementioned Byrd-McCline tilt, fans also had to sit through a jab-n-grab bout between John Ruiz and Andrew Golota and a retirement party of Larry Donald playing ‘patty cake’ on Evander Holyfield’s mug for twelve rounds. The most exciting fight that night was Hasim Rahman coming in lighter than he has in years and throwing more punches than he has in years as he stopped Kali Meehan after just four rounds. The fans were pleased.

As long as heavyweights continue to be sold and packaged in jumbo sizes the problem will persist, at least until fans of the big boys appreciate boxers such as Chris Byrd. Don’t hold your breath, that’s rather unlikely. Boxing fans are a beer swilling lot as opposed to wine sipping connoisseurs. Those who crack the cap of a can of lager aren’t likely to pull the cork off a finely aged cabernet sauvignon to savor its ‘nose’ or oak and tannin influences.

Generally speaking, fight fans of the heavyweight division would rather crack open a ‘Can of Klitschko’ than uncork a ‘Bottle of Byrd’.

The Economics theory, ‘The Law of Diminishing Returns’ - loosely translated - says that the more you have of one thing the less enjoyment you get from it after a certain point. My economics professor explained this to me in layman’s terms by demonstrating that the more beer you consume the better and happier one might feel (that ‘one’ being a college student in this case). However, after a certain amount of beer, the more lager you drink the less satisfaction you get out of each additional beer. Less can be more.

In heavyweight boxing the giant fighters we see today just aren’t designed to perform late in fights like the smaller men do—or how the smaller heavyweights of past generations did.

‘The Law of Diminishing Returns’ applied to heavyweight boxing says that after a certain point in a fight the more rounds we see, the less entertaining the bouts. As the big boys are the economic machine that drives the sport, it would make sense to maximize the entertainment value by minimizing the rounds down to eight, and maybe ten for a championship bout.

In the end I may be wrong, but my Economics professor would be proud. I did learn something.