

A Sweet Science Top 10 Wish List for 2005

Written by Marc Lichtenfeld

Thursday, 16 December 2004 18:00

The end of the year is always a time when lists are compiled of the best and worst of the year and everything in between. Rather than live in the past, I'm looking to the future. Here is my Top 10 Wish List for 2005.

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr. gets the credit he deserves -- "Pretty Boy" Floyd is simply the best boxer in the sport. He possesses blinding hand speed, fantastic defensive skills, and a set of stones as big as anyone in boxing. He has repeatedly stepped into the ring against the best in the division, even when it wasn't necessary. When Mayweather moved up to lightweight, he very easily could have taken on then IBF champ Paul Spadafora - a fighter who presented very little danger. Instead, Mayweather took on Jose Luis Castillo, a rough and tumble fighter who would make life as difficult for Mayweather as anyone he has ever faced. And then he fought him again after some questioned his victory.

2. Floyd Mayweather Sr. goes away - While he may be a good trainer, he doesn't seem to realize that trainers don't sell tickets, especially ones that are difficult to understand. His diatribe against Jack Mosley before the De La Hoya - Mosley fight was not only classless, but also inaccurate.

3. A heavyweight emerges - All three heavyweight champs look very beatable. While there is plenty of talent in the lower divisions, it would be nice if a true heavyweight king arrives. I have a feeling that person isn't on the national scene yet. He's probably 5-0 and working out in some backwater gym somewhere. But maybe, just maybe, we'll get lucky and someone can emerge and shake things up.

4. Mike Tyson either wins the heavyweight title or goes away - Mike Tyson isn't interesting as a used up shell of a fighter. He's becoming a caricature of himself outside of the ring. If somehow Tyson was granted another shot and actually won - wow! That would be just the kind of shake up I'm looking for. However, assuming that doesn't happen, let's not pay any more attention to him until he proves that he can still compete with someone in the top 20.

5. Bernard Hopkins goes out with a bang - I have immensely enjoyed watching Bernard Hopkins over the years. All he does is show up in shape and get rid of whoever is standing in front of him. Whether it's a mega fight with De La Hoya or a snoozer with Hakkar, Hopkins takes his job seriously and works effectively. He reminds me of Hagler in that way. He deserves to go out on a high note and I hope he can do it in another mega-fight, perhaps by knocking out Trinidad even earlier this time.

6. I'm proven right about Felix Trinidad - Many greater boxing minds than mine believe Trinidad was and still is an all time great. I have always believed he was the most overrated boxer of our time. He has skills, power and especially heart - traits that I admire. However, his chin is not only suspect, it's downright weak. The man goes down more than Little Oral Annie. But because of his tremendous heart he has been able to get up and persevere. He lost to De La

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Hoya (no matter what the scorecards say) and got blown out by Hopkins. He's a very good fighter, but not an all time great. I hope that Hopkins (or someone else) will prove me right, because it's an argument that is not easy to win.

7. Morales - Barrera IV - Boxing fans always point to the Gatti - Ward trilogy as the greatest three fight set of this generation. But I think that title belongs to Morales - Barrera. The first fight was simply the best I'd ever seen. All three fights were so close, why not do it again and see if one can finally emerge to dominate the other? And if they can't, they'll just have to fight a fifth time.

8. Lennox Lewis stays retired - Lewis was a very good heavyweight champion. He never disgraced the title (unless you count showing up overweight in his last fight) and was exciting when he wanted to be. Even if he came back for one fight to school Klitschko, so what? I like when boxers go out on their own terms and stay retired. It goes against the stereotype and if anyone has the ability to represent the sport in a positive light, it's Lennox Lewis.

9. Poor officiating gets fixed -- Officials are human beings and they're going to get some calls wrong. But the officiating in boxing is much worse than the major sports. Why Larry O'Connell is still allowed to judge and subsequently ruin fights is a mystery. And there are plenty of others. Look at a sport like baseball. Sure the umps blow a call every now and then, but for the most part they do an outstanding job. I can deal with a judge who gets a round or two wrong once in a great while, or a ref who misses a foul or knockdown, but not with the frequency that it currently occurs. I think the only solution would be to rank judges and refs and assign the big fights based on those rankings.

10. A boxers union finally catches on - Boxers need the healthcare and retirement benefits more than any other athletes. Even if purses don't go up as a result of the union, having just those two benefits would make an enormous difference in many boxers' lives. It's an expensive proposition, but one of the most worthwhile undertakings I have seen in the sweet science.

JABS

What is **Corrie Sanders** doing back in the ring? He trained about as much as I did for the Klitschko fight. If a man can't get motivated for a fight for the biggest prize in sports, don't expect me to ever waste my time or money on him again.

Joe Mesi – don't get back in there either. Whether you can get yourself cleared or not, you suffered a brain injury. That's some serious shinola. You made some money, you'll always be remembered as a hard-hitting contender. The risk is just too great.

Tarver – Johnson should be interesting. I can't decide who I'm pulling for. Johnson is truly one of the nicest guys you'll ever meet. He so deserves his time in the limelight and the money that comes with it. But let's face it – Tarver is more exciting and would probably be better for boxing. I'm torn.

Until next time, obey my commands and protect yourself at all times.