

## Glen Johnson's Boxing Value has Appreciated

Written by Matthew Aguilar

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At the end of his thrilling upset of Antonio Tarver Saturday in Los Angeles, Glencoffe Johnson made those of us who picked against him want to take up croquet.

How could we dismiss his heart and determination? How could we disregard his durability and persistence? And how could we overlook a ton of experience and above-average skills?

But we ignored Johnson's strengths, and stubbornly pointed out his weaknesses. And after winning a split decision, the native of Jamaica could have stared into the HBO cameras with a look of defiance and said, "I told you so."

Instead, the newly-recognized light heavyweight king took the high rode – which isn't surprising considering the class with which he has conducted his pro career. And, rather than gloat, he showed the boxing world how a gentleman wins.

"I hope I'm appreciated," he said simply.

Regardless of whether you thought Johnson won or lost Saturday, the boxing world can no longer deny him. In three months, the "Road Warrior" has gone from tough contender to pound-for-pound entrant with victories over two of the best fighters of the era.

Before Sept. 25, Johnson was known more for a funny first name and a knockout loss to middleweight champ Bernard Hopkins than any victory.

Saturday, though, Johnson seemed to use that lack of recognition as motivation.

It appeared even Tarver fell victim to Johnson's journeyman reputation early, looking to land another bomb that would send everyone home early. It took him four rounds to realize he wouldn't be knocking Johnson out.

By that time, he was already at a disadvantage on the scorecards of Melvina Lathan and Chuck Giampa.

But this was a fight that Johnson won – not that Tarver lost. Though he was exhausted by the late rounds, Tarver fought with all his heart. And, in the end, both fighters left everything they had in the Staples Center.

Both fighters should be praised for giving up their bogus alphabet belts to fight each other. Hopefully the rest of the sport will take note.

And both fighters should also be commended for the dignity they displayed after it was all over.

But, most of all, Johnson should be recognized as a fighter to be reckoned with.

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Because, after Saturday, he is certainly appreciated.