

James Toney Would Love to Fight

Written by Rick Folstad

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James Toney is like that crazy knight in the old Monty Python skit who keeps trying to fight even as his limbs are getting hacked off.

Maybe you've seen it. With both arms and one leg cut off and blood squirting everywhere, the crazy knight is still hopping around on one leg, still challenging the other knight to fight him, calling him names and making fun of him while he tries to keep his balance.

That's Toney. Down, but not out. Injured, but not dead. Ready to fight, even if he can't.

In the past 11 months, Toney has been healthy all of about three days, or at least that's the way it feels. He was getting ready to fight Jameel McCline in February of this year, but he ruptured his Achilles tendon shortly before the fight.

He was healthy just long enough to beat Rydell Booker this past September, but he didn't escape from that one-sided fight unblemished. He tore his bicep and has been put back on the shelf for another few months. It's almost like his body is quickly outgrowing itself.

The injuries have kept him out of the ring, but they haven't kept him out of the spotlight. And that's the thing about Toney. He never disappears for long, never really leaves. Though banged up, he's just on the outskirts of the heavyweight division looking in, waiting for a chance to steal the moment, grab the headlines, to question the skills and heart of every other heavyweight out there.

He's a little like that crazy knight. Even while he's injured, he's still calling guys out, throwing around insults, trying to get them lined up in a row for easy pickings for when he breaks out of this spell of hard luck injuries.

The first guy on his wish list of "bums I would love to fight" is WBC champ Vitali Klitschko, who all but ended the career of Danny Williams earlier this month.

Even after destroying Williams, Klitschko was still criticized for everything from throwing poor punches to not putting Williams away quicker to driving the wrong kind of car to the gym.

If he would have stopped Williams in the first round instead of the eighth, they would have called for an investigation. Nothing the guy does is right. Regardless of Toney's claims, Klitschko is arguably the best heavyweight in the world right now, but no one wants to actually come out and admit it.

Toney calls him "Frankenstein," as in "I want Frankenstein first," which is relatively tame for Toney, who lives by the creed: "Anyone, anywhere, any time."

As for a fight with Klitschko, who injured his hand against Williams and is tentatively set to fight

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Hasim Rahman next, it's "not any time soon." But that's all right. There are others out there waiting to get exposed, waiting to be humbled.

At least that's what Toney - who hopes to fight again in March or April - claims.

"None of these guys can beat me," he says. "They're all a bunch of bums. They're all terrible."

All Toney wants is a chance to show he's right.

The catch is he has to stay healthy to prove it.