

George Foreman Looking Forward To Reunion With Larry Merchant

Written by Michael Woods
Thursday, 28 February 2013 16:32



I do believe I won a fan for life when I told George Foreman that I was pretty sure he'd be the junior partner in the booth when he, Larry Merchant and Tim Ryan call boxing action from Macau for HBO2 on April 6.

Foreman, age 64, will reunite with old HBO partner Merchant, age 82, and ex CBS blow-by-blow caller Ryan, age 73. Filipino-born Brian Vitoria defends his flyweight crowns against Juan Francisco Estrada and Puerto Rico's Rocky Martinez defends his junior lightweight belt against Diego Magdaleno on that card. Much of the focus will be on flyweight Zou Shiming, the two-time gold medallist from China who will make his pro debut.

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Merchant ended a 35 year run with HBO in December 2012. Foreman called fights with HBO from 1992-2005.

So, I think you're the junior man on that crew, I told Foreman.

He laughed. "I needed that," he said. "Can't wait to renew old arguments with Larry again! Happy days are here again!"

I wondered if George had ever worked with Ryan, who hasn't called boxing in a long spell. "Never," Foreman said. "Looking forward to it. He'll be a good referee," he said, laughing.

Foreman noted that he and Merchant used to spar on air, as when they fought over whether or not the various sanctioning bodies whose belts Roy Jones held should be recognized. "Then we'd be eating out at dinner together," he said. "I love the guy.

Yes, Larry has always had some Brooklyn in him, I told George, and the Texas is strong in you.

"True. I found this out in the Jobs Corps," he said. "Guys would tease me, and I'd want to fight. They'd say, 'What's your problem, country boy?'"

Confession: I'm probably in the deep minority, but I will be tuning in more to hear these vets call the action than to see the fights lol.

I checked in with Top Rank president Todd DuBoef to see how this all came together.

It turns out this isn't a nostalgia play, there is some solid reasoning for getting these sages

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together for another limited run, DuBoef said. "We realized in Chinese culture, they are very brand oriented, and we wanted the highest level brands for them to associate with. We felt if we could get both of them, George and Larry, we could really anchor that boxing brand, to the highest level of the last 30 years."

Also, he said, "Bob (Arum) went way back with Tim, to a special time when it was Tim and Gil (Clancy)(on CBS). "This wasn't about trying to get publicity, but trying to present the product the best possible way in a new market."

Shiming is, obviously, a key component to getting off to a strong start and attract mass eyeballs in Asia. "It would be like is Michael Phelps went pro swimming," DuBoef said with a small chuckle when I asked how popular Zou is in his home nation.

DuBoef sees Asia as a new frontier, which can be tapped like Latin America, Mexico, Puerto Rico. "They are incredible consumers," he said, so it will be a work in progress to see what works for them. He said that no expense will be spared in the production, which will be of a caliber associated with a Pacquiao pay-per-view. And, speaking of, if this works, might we see Manny fight in Macau? "We're not just looking at Macau," he said, "we're looking at Singapore, they're both viable markets, incredible growing markets. We're starting to dip our toes in there, hopefully we can bring products and attract to the Asian consumers."

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deepwater says:

thanks federal reserve for selling the usa out to china.dear sweet science readers the dow is at an all time high when the us economy is producing nothing and we have insane men in the whitehouse punishing the people. the big bubble is about to burst get away from the dollar. trade your dollars for cartons of cigarettes at this point. ho hum ... This writer makes the article about him and foreman and merchant just like 50 cents and dibella make the dib fight about them. michael katz would never stand for this! intelligent people can argue and have different viewpoints and still respect each other and have dinner. I liked listening to the contrasting view points with these two. they both know what they are talking about. I argue with my co worker who loves the keynesian economic theory. He loves it because he is profiting from it and has no intention to own worthless houses or raise a family ever so he could care less about the debt and future standard of living dropping for 90% of americans. I come from the austrian business cycle theory that respects sound money and I actually time the bubbles and busts cycle. we are total opposites on monatary policy but we love a good steak.(best steak for value is the newport

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steak at the florence butcher in nyc) Pick your battles.

Radam G says:

Dangit! And I will be straight up in China for the whole nine. And I may just show somebodee and dey spank buddy how the Chinese and Pinoy up in me get dey shine. Hehe! In China, I'm uh Chinoy! Holla!

tlig says:

"lol"? In an article on this website? What on earth is that?

SouthPaul says:

Deepwater mentioned Mike Katz. Whatever happened to him? Use to enjoy his articles back in the days of Houseofboxing.com.

Radam G says:

Mike Katz is [still] at USA Today gettin' funky wif it. He stills knocks the wolfin'-mouth skunk outta any hyped-up punk! Holla!

SouthPaul says:

Lmfao. Good to know. Love is tell the truth style. Sat near his hobo lookin' *** at Casamayor vs Freitas. Directly seated next to me was Tapia and his lovely wife Theresa. Great memories.

leon30001 says:

"lol". [I]"lol"????[/I] This website needs a new editor, right NOW!

Radam G says:

Asian TIME! You HEARD! Holla!

tlig says:

[QUOTE=leon30001;26377]"lol". [I]"lol"????[/I] This website needs a new editor, right NOW![/QUOTE]

Just wait until he starts signing off his articles with "Holla!" a la Radam.

Radam G says:

Ain't got dat type of power, Tlig. Don't make me out to be a sparking tower! I may just start starting off my jive with: "In the beginning...." a la BIG POPPA in da SKY! I ain't shy! Hehehe!

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One day we will all die. Holla!

jzzy says:

Tim Ryan is one of the all time great sports announcer. These guys will make a great team.

Many of us

fight fans are looking forward to this matchup. Good Luck HBO