

What Goes Up, Must Come Down

Written by Steve Kim
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Jr. welterweight Zab Judah makes his return this Saturday night in Tunica, Mississippi against Argentinian Omar Weis.

The last we saw of 'Super' Judah he was being poleaxed by a thunderous right hand from Kostya Tszyu and doing a funny little dance that caused referee Jay Nady to call a halt to the bout.

From there, Judah would proceed to incite a mini-riot that included throwing a stool at a cadre of security and police that were there to keep the peace and attempted to choke out Nady.

And who says that Mike Tyson was a bad role model for Judah? It looked to everyone there at the MGM Grand that he was following his example perfectly.

It was as sickening as it was immature and for his actions Judah would be suspended for six months by the Nevada State Athletic Commission.

Which seemed a bit lenient if you ask me, afterall, he would have been suspended for three months anyway for getting stopped by Tszyu in the first place.

It was only a short time ago that Judah was considered one of the bright prospects in boxing. And he was, but like many other young phenoms it was a classic case of 'too much, too soon'.

Judah, would fall in line with the likes of Fernando Vargas, David Reid, Diego Corrales and Floyd Mayweather.

Who one way or another, found that oftentimes the most difficult times occur outside the ring.

Only Mayweather remains unscathed inside the ropes but his life continues to be turbulent outside of it.

Judah, coming into his November date versus Tszyu was poised to capture the undisputed jr. welterweight crown and take his place among the game's elite performers pound-for-pound.

Instead, as Tszyu withstood an early fusillade of this young southpaws punches, Judah, would be exposed as a not-ready-for-prime-time performer.

By the second round Judah would be in a full retreat that only France could

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appreciate and it was clear that this was a matchup of an experienced, hardened professional against an ill-prepared prospect.

While Judah was running through and around hand-picked opponents, Tszyu was going up against the likes of Vince Phillips, Diobelys Hurtado, Sharmba Mitchell and Miguel Angel Gonzalez.

We should have seen this coming-but most of us didn't (I admit, I didn't).

Judah, had flat-lined for the better part of two years and his progress as a prizefighter stagnated.

Blessed with immense God-given tools, Judah's performances would become less and less impressive as time went on and it's no coincidence that this occurred right around the time he became the surrogate little brother of fellow Brooklynite Mike Tyson. He became more concerned about his hip-hop persona than his profession.

And while trying to become boxing's version of Nas, he came into his bout with Tszyu with a certain type of hubris and arrogance that would leave a young Cassius Clay blushing.

Sources say that Tszyu was taken so lightly that the 29th floor of the MGM Grand was turned into one big, week-long block party. Judah and his father Yoel were said to have been making demands of Showtime to provide them with some extra perks (like cars) after dispatching of Tszyu. Too bad they still had to actually fight.

The Russian born, Australian would turn out the lights on Judah's party with one single punch and Judah would go from prospect to suspect.

He had hit rock bottom. It go so bad that during his disgusting behavior in the aftermath of his KO loss, Tyson was one of several people trying to calm Judah down. You know it's bad when 'Iron' Mike is playing the role of peacemaker.

But perhaps this was exactly what Judah needed- a comeuppance and if he can't look in the mirror and mature from this, he never will. Things had come a little bit too easy for Judah leading into his first loss.

Blessed with a high powered promotional company(Main Events) and an influential manager (Shelly Finkel), he was fed a buffet of hand-picked fights and high exposure in a sport that you have to be hungry to succeed in.

As he comes back this Saturday night he finds the road will now be a bit bumpier. Where he was once considered flawless, he now has a reputation of

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having shaky chin and a shakier level of character and maturity, with
everything to prove. He shouldn't just be hungry, he should be downright
starving now.