

Lacy-Calzaghe and the End of Sarcasm

Written by Rick Folstad
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All the rhetoric should be behind us now, shoved under a rug, off a cliff or maybe behind a shelf, wherever it is that accusations, sarcasm and innuendo go to die.

The fight between IBF super-middleweight champ Jeff Lacy and long-time WBO champ Joe Calzaghe is set for March 4 in Manchester, England, and that should overshadow the finger-pointing, the busted plans and the constant bickering that have marred this fight from the very beginning.

That's why I hate to bring it all up again. But I think I should. It's my job. Just one last time. Clear the air, as they like to say. Put it to rest. Stomp the SOB to death.

Here's the biggie: Why did Joe Calzaghe take a fight in September when he knew his big-money fight was set for early November against Lacy and scheduled to be held within a soccer kick of his home in Wales? Calzaghe broke his hand in that little warm-up fight, causing the cancellation of travel plans and hotel accommodations worldwide.

Calzaghe was recently asked that simple question on a conference call, but before the champ could answer, his promoter, Frank Warren, cut in.

"I'll explain for him," Warren said. "Very simply, Jeff was going to defend against Robin Reid (in August) and we certainly weren't going to sit around and wait for that to happen. Joe had been out of the ring for awhile and he needed a fight. Unfortunately, he fractured his hand."

Yeah. Unfortunately.

So what about Calzaghe ducking Lacy? Any truth to the rumor? It seems like he's been as tough to nail down as a tarp in a wind storm.

Again, we go to Warren.

"We tried to make this fight over a year ago," he said. "It's not something that just happened. We've been trying to make it for awhile. We're going to find out on March 4 who's the man."

A year ago? Doesn't sound right, but at least a deal has been made.

Finally, why does Lacy have to go to England to fight instead of Joe coming over here? What's wrong with our country? Calzaghe allergic to airplanes? He never leaves home.

"I'm willing to go to his home turf and unify the division," said Lacy, who would probably travel by sled dog to the North Pole if that's where Calzaghe wanted to fight. "I have a goal out there and my goal is to unify the super-middleweight division. That's my dream...I'm willing to go anywhere. If Joe would have come over here, we would have fought here. It so happened the

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fight was made in England, and I look forward to that.”

Lacy’s game plan is simple: A KO. Win by knockout. Take it out of the hands of the hometown cronies. Lacy doesn’t have to book a flight across the ocean to get robbed. He can get mugged just down the street.

As for Calzaghe, I used to think he was like Big Foot. There were occasional sightings, but no concrete proof he really existed.

But someone was on the other line on that conference call, and he sounded both confident and articulate, so I’m assuming it was him.

“This fight wasn’t hard to make,” said Calzaghe, contradicting Warren who claimed it took over a year. “As far as I’m concerned, I think this is my destiny. I’ve been world champion for eight years and I’ve been waiting for this moment. I’ve always said good things come to those who wait. A lot of people think I’m going to get beat in this fight and as far as I’m concerned, I’ve waited so long for this fight and I can’t wait for it to come. I think it’s going to be the fight of the year.”

Lacy wasn’t quite as philosophical

“I’m lost for words,” he said. “I’m just ready to fight. Too bad we still have to wait a few months. I’m coming over to his hometown to take what is mine. Look out.”

I hope he was referring to Calzaghe.