

Samuel Peter Opens Up

Written by Rick Folstad
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Samuel "The Nigerian Nightmare" Peter is the new king of one-liners.

He's not exactly the reincarnation of Bob Hope, and you won't find him doing standup at some comedy club in Fresno.

But that's because he's not trying to be funny. He's just short with his answers, like a guy who had to catch a train and didn't have a lot of time to talk.

One thing about his answers, though. Along with being short, they don't always have a lot in common with the questions. He strays a little and he won't be caught giving out any particulars.

For example, on a recent conference call promoting his Jan. 6 rematch with James "Lights Out" Toney (69-5-3, 43 KOs), someone asked Peter (27-1, 22 KOs) if he'd done anything special to maybe improve his stamina. He seemed to be running out of it in his split-decision win over Toney back on Sept. 2 at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.

"This time," Sam said, "it will all be good."

A little vague, but very polite.

Guess he's not going to tell us how he improved his stamina.

Another guy asked Peter, who is from Africa, if he planned on putting more punches together and maybe pouring it on a little more this time.

"Yes," he said. "This time everything will be all right with me."

Again, vague but polite. Sounded a lot like the first answer.

Then someone asked him if he planned on doing anything different in the second fight.

"Come Jan. 6, and then you will see."

Not a big talker.

And not exactly insightful answers, but he's not looking to score public relations points. If he has any secrets, he's not sharing them.

Finally, Peter was asked if he was surprised by how well Toney withstood his punching power.

"I feel good because I won that fight," Peter said. "But I hit him clean."

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And?

We'll just have to wait.

The upcoming fight with Toney at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Hollywood, Fla. will be a WBC heavyweight eliminator (Showtime). That's what it was called in their first fight, but apparently, that fight didn't really count. At least Toney isn't counting it.

He won't include the loss on his record because it was the mistake of two "blind" judges.

Sounds like the WBC didn't count the fight either. They're the ones who called for the rematch because of controversial scoring.

The winner is the mandatory challenger to WBC champ Oleg Maskaev, though "mandatory" doesn't pack a lot of punch in the fight game.

To get ready for his fight with Peter, Toney has been working long hours with Tae-Bo guru Billy Blanks, the TV infomercial guy.

Asked if he expected Toney to be in better shape and throw more punches because of the workout Blanks has been giving him, Peter finally cut loose and let it all hang out. Or at least he cut loose for Samuel Peter.

"Billy Blanks will not be inside the ring," Peter calmly reminded us. "When I hit him, everything that Billy Blanks told him, he is going to forget. He is going to fight James Toney's style and that is what I know."

Whoa, Sam. Settle down. That's 37 words in a row.

Typical fighter. First you can't get him to talk, then you can't shut him up.