

## Things to be Thankful For.

Written by Steve Kim

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Well, the holiday season is now upon us with Thanksgiving just a few days away. A time to count our blessings and realize that we all have things to be thankful for.

But what about those in boxing? Yeah, it's a tough game and it can be the cruelest of games and toughest of businesses. But they have things to be grateful for too, right?

Yup. And here's a sampling of who is saying 'thanks' and for what.

Roy Jones: For Antonio Tarver not being more aggressive in trying to give him his first legitimate loss. And also that everyone is playing up the issue of his weight loss as the reason for why he struggled with Tarver.

Floyd Mayweather: That his managerial contract with James Prince is finally over. Giving up over a half-million bucks to a guy per fight that never really did anything for your career can make anyone cranky.

Bob Arum: That the Nevada State Athletic Commission did nothing in the way of disciplining him for his incendiary remarks following Oscar De La Hoya's second loss to Shane Mosley. When you make slanderous accusations like Arum did following that fight, they shouldn't go unpunished.

Shane Mosley: For having three judges that weren't influenced by who was promoting his rematch with Oscar and didn't care about the possible ramifications of a De La Hoya loss.

Oscar De La Hoya: That his loyal fan base believes that he won the fight with Mosley, and despite what the official record says, will consider it a win for 'the Golden Boy' Therefore, maintaining his popularity and market value.

James Toney: For finding some professional discipline that has revived a Hall-of-Fame career.

Mike Tyson: For the fact that despite his recent track record there are still a group of deluded fans who still thinks he has it and can once again be a force in the heavyweight division. It's because of this and his mystique, that there will always be a place for him in the game of boxing.

ESPN2: That their studio segments with Max Kellerman and Brian Kenny on Friday Night Fights are so entertaining and informative because the bottom line is that their fights this past year, for the most part, have been lacking.

Joe Calzaghe: That his promoter Frank Warren keeps protecting him so that he won't have to fight any real, live opposition at 168 pounds. Calzaghe, is very good, but he should have stepped up a long time ago.

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Arturo Gatti: That HBO loves him and his brawling style. That's why after his three wars with Micky Ward, he now gets to take on guys like Gianluca Branco on their airwaves and soon after that, Jesse James Leija.

Derrick Gainer: For being Roy Jones' best friend over the years. Without that relationship, there was no way in the world that he and his stinky style would have ever been on HBO so many times. Hopefully his fight with Juan Manuel Marquez will be his last appearance on the network.

Manny Medina: Despite what all the pundits have said time and time again, not quitting and calling it a day. Every few years it seems like 'Mantecas' takes a bad loss to a world class fighter and everyone pronounces him dead. Only to see Medina then win another title in stunning fashion. That's exactly what happened when he got stopped by Juan Manuel Marquez for his IBF belt in February, but then five months later he'd shock the world by downing Scott Harrison for the WBO belt. Amazingly, his fifth title.

Mark Johnson: That he gave up drinking, got focused and trained hard, which led to his upset win over Fernando Montiel for the WBO jr. bantamweight crown. It's really a shame that the world never got to see the prime 'Too Sharp' of the late 90's but this recent win suggests that Johnson still has something left in him.

Acelino Freitas: That he has a cushy multi-fight contract with Showtime that has allowed him to take soft, easy fights for big money. Since decisioning Joel Casamayor in January of 2002, he's taken on the likes of Daniel Attah, Juan Carlos Ramirez and Jorge Barrios. Not exactly the most stern tests if you ask me. Yeah, I know you're supposed to get a 'gimme' after a big win, but three?

Sharmba Mitchell: That he is somehow getting another shot at Kostya Tszyu. Remember, when they fought the first time, Mitchell was in the fight till his knee gave out. It was thought that Tszyu would never give the slick southpaw a rematch but he gets one. Yeah, it's in Moscow, but still, beggars can't be choosers. And it says here that Mitchell is a 'live' dog in that fight.

Johnny Tapia: Just to be living and breathing, much less fighting. Seriously, how many times has this guy been pronounced dead? If he was a cat he'd be running out of lives.

Julio Gonzalez: That he somehow, somehow got a fair shake in Germany against Dariusz Michalczewski, in winning the WBO light heavyweight title. I guess miracles do happen.

The Fans: That there are still fighters like Manny Pacquiao, Arturo Gatti, Erik Morales, Ricardo Mayorga, Antonio Margarito, Juan Manuel Marquez and James Toney to enjoy.

Boxing: That despite all the self-inflicted wounds the game continually give itself, it still has a loyal base of fans that stick with this game through thick and thin.

Have a happy and safe Thanksgiving!!!!