

The Foul Pole Strikes Back.

Written by Joey Knish
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(IBOPboxing.com)

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? ???? What makes a 35-year old former fringe contender (actually he was always on the fringe but just sometimes a contender) want to come back to the sweet science to possibly have his eggs scrambled worse than they already are? Is it money? I doubt it. Is it the thirst for a championship title shot? Probably not. Is it the lack of quality and depth at the heavyweight class? Maybe. Is it watching another European heavyweight (Juan Carlos Gomez) being showcased on HBO's 'Night of Young Heavyweights' at the tender age of 35? Quite possibly.

One of the hardest things to do in any profession is walk away. Whether at the peak of your game or at the bottom, chances are it is something you have been doing for the majority of your life and just walking away brings both fear and emptiness. The emptiness comes from no longer doing something you have done for as long as you can remember - in the brutal world of boxing that is assuming a fighter still can indeed remember things. That is accompanied by the fear of fitting back into society and doing 'normal' things in a world where all you have known is anything but "normal".

In the case of Andrew Golota, the word "normal" is one that is seldom, if ever, used. Golota is back in the boxing business after a 3-year absence that was induced by yet another weird, embarrassing moment in the ring. Last time I saw Andrew Golota, he was suffering another dilemma in his life as he realized, in the ring unfortunately, that he didn't enjoy getting hit by hard punches. The opponent on this night was Mike Tyson and, after absorbing some punishing shots from Iron Mike, Golota decided between rounds that he had simply had enough. I felt a little sorry for the big guy as he left the ring after being yelled at by trainer, Al Certo and then showered with all sorts of refreshments by "fans" as he made his way back to the shelter of his dressing room. At the time I thought - and hoped - we had seen the last of Andrew Golota, for his sake and ours.

Unfortunately the desire to come back, the boredom of retirement, or the pain of that last fight, was too much for the man they dubbed the 'Foul Pole' (I assume you know about his habit of hitting below the belt). His claim, a few years back, to an Illinois state trooper as being a "special officer" didn't go over very well and perhaps he learned that becoming a 'real' police officer was just too much work. The ring beckoned him back. The real problem for Golota is that he isn't as young as he was when he got his big opportunities - and when he did, he looked as bad as one possibly could have. Let's recap - in 1996 the big man from Poland had his first major fight when he took on Riddick Bowe and controlled the bout. Brain-cramps ensued and Golota found himself disqualified for repeated low blows.

From the category of "I wouldn't believe it if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes", Golota and

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Bowe got together to do it again and they really did do it again. In a near exact replay of the first bout, Golota was clearly winning the fight yet looked for, and found, a way out. This time it was two rounds later and Golota left as the loser for being DQ'd for repeated low blows.

Those consecutive disqualifications somehow 'earned' Golota a shot at Heavyweight champ Lennox Lewis. Perhaps it was the attention he had gained through his foul-filled acts, but 'King' Lewis made sure his 'royal jewels' were well cared for and did not expose them to the same treatment that Bowe did. Lennox destroyed Golota within one round. After that, Golota worked his way back up to a shot at the 'next great thing' at the time, Michael Grant. Fighting for the NABF laurels, Golota dropped Grant twice in the first round . . . eight rounds later Golota was TKO'd with another loss. Perhaps Andrew felt Grant's pain and suffering in the first round and, knowing that it hurts being hit hard, let the wunderkind back into the fight and gave it away.

His first appearance since the Tyson meltdown was in August of this year, as Golota returned to the ring and broke-down journeyman Brian Nix in 7 rounds. Next up is an apparent date with Terrance Lewis, who is 6-9-1 in his past 16 trips into the ring. Lewis isn't a 'has been' but that is only because he 'never was'; and perhaps Golota just wants to put a win on his resume over someone, anyone, named "Lewis". With 31 wins and 21 knockouts, Team Golota may be taking on a bit too much, too soon. Heaven forbid that Terrance Lewis hits their man hard - then what will Andrew do? I guess that is why we watch.

While I am fairly sure we have seen the best that Andrew Golota has to offer, I only hope we have also seen the worst.