

Back from Lunch.

Written by Steve Kim
Monday, 01 September 2003 21:00

Ever go to a store where you need to buy something or get something serviced only to walk up to the front door and see a small little sign that reads:" Out to Lunch, Back at 2:00" And then you look down at your timepiece and it reads a quarter-past-noon.

Well, that's basically what boxing does for the summer months. From the middle half of June till early September, the game of boxing takes a siesta. Yeah, they'll have an occasional fight here or there, but for the most part promoters and networks are very weary of putting on it's biggest events during the summer.

And the reason is very simple, studies have shown that viewer ship levels on television are at their lowest because most folks are taking their vacations at this time. But as you can see with the 'Back to School' commercials running on TV now, the only group of people that should be happier than parents with school kids are boxing fans.

Because not only is school starting up again, but so is big time boxing.

* September 13th, Oscar De La Hoya-Shane Mosley II: Now, when was the last time you had a 'super fight' have a guy that hadn't won in the more than two years and was 0-2-1 in his last three bouts? But regardless of the recent slump of Mosley this is a 'super fight', De La Hoya is coming off his big win over nemesis Fernando Vargas last year and then had an easy tune-up victory over the aged Yory Boy Campas. Believe it or not, his star has never been brighter.

But what's really the story here is the revenge factor that exists. In June of 2000, Mosley would clearly out-point De La Hoya with his speed and quickness to hand, what Oscar believes, is his only real legitimate loss. It's interesting to note that in many respects both guys are putting their careers on the line here. A win for Mosley and he's back among the games elite, a loss and he's the modern day Donald Curry. If De La Hoya wins it just opens up the possibility for more mega paydays and his legacy is basically secured. A loss, and he probably retires. Make no mistake about it, plenty is on the line here at the MGM Grand.

And do you need anymore proof that this is a big fight? Consider that over \$11 million in tickets have been sold for De La Hoya-Mosley II and pay-per-view sales could reach in excess of a million.

Now, that's a 'super fight'.

Also on that same day boxing fans will be treated to boxing over the free airwaves as NBC will be showing featherweight prospect Rocky Juarez against David Murrillo. Now, this isn't a big fight in any respect except that anytime a fight is shown on one of the big networks it has to be considered a big deal.

Remember, before embarking on a three week experiment with 'the sweet science' in May, 'the

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Peacock' hadn't shown boxing in about a dozen years. The series did very well and not only is boxing back on the same day as this years biggest fight but sources indicate that NBC will be doing 10 more shows next year in conjunction with Main Events.

* September 20th, Chris Byrd- Fres Oquendo: Ok, lets be honest, if you could pick out of hat and choose two top-10 heavyweight that would make the most horrific fight stylistically, this would be it. Byrd, with his unusual southpaw style never makes for good fights anyway but when you combine that with 'the Big O's' awkward movements, you're in for some boxing agony.

But at least Byrd, the reigning IBF heavyweight champion, can finally defend his crown and make some money. I mean, you had to figure when he out-pointed Evander Holyfield last December for this vacant title that he'd finally get some fights against the marquee heavyweights and he'd make a pretty good living for himself after being avoided for much of his career. After all, who'd fight this crafty boxer with nothing to gain, but with a belt around his waist, he was going to get offers to fight all over, right? Uh, no.

In fact, while he is contractually bound to have two fights a year with his promoter Don King, this will be his first outing of 2003. Is Byrd so avoided or the game so watered down that a heavyweight titlist has to walk around with a sign reading:"

Will make title defense for food"

Look for Byrd to out-box Oquendo in a rather tepid affair. Hey at least on this HBO broadcast, they will be running a replay of the De La Hoya-Mosley rematch.

* September 27th, " The New Generation": Is an HBO triple-header featuring the new lot of heavyweights. But what does it say about this supposedly new group when most of these guys are already above the age of 30?

- DaVarryl Williamson- Jose Mesi: Mesi, has gotten some attention because he's undefeated and can punch- and oh yeah, he's white. And 'Baby Joe' has a chance to show against the hard-punching Williamson that he's not just another in a long line of 'Great White Hopes'. And he comes into the bout with a decided home ring advantage as the card is emanating from his hometown of Buffalo, New York. But as they say, ' You can't bring'em with you' and it will be the moment of truth for Mesi who so far has been matched with a collection of has-beens and never-were's.

Williamson, was stopped in his only professional loss but he possesses a big right hand and he has been tested in ways that Mesi hasn't. He had to get off the canvas to stop the gargantuan Corey Sanders. You get the feeling here, whoever lands first, may land last.

- Dominick Guinn- Duncan Dokiwari: Now, if there is really a guy that can be considered a young, up-and-comer, it's Guinn, who's 28 years old and actually comes with a background in boxing. He's not one of these guys who decided to give boxing a try after an unsuccessful stint in other sports.

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Which is precisely what Michael Grant was, a guy that gave boxing a go after exhausting his other options. And when Guinn knocked out Grant this past June, you could see the difference. One guy was a fighter, with a deep amateur background, the other was a failed power forward. And what makes Guinn even more refreshing is that he stands at a modest 6'2, 220 pounds, in other words, he's not the kind of guy that will have talking heads gushing about how there needs to be 'super heavyweight' divisions and that he's the 'new millennium' fighter. No, he's just a guy that knows how to actually fight. Fighting is about skill not size.

And in Dokiwari, he'll be facing a bigger man who got off to a promising start in the late 90's only to be halted by promotional and managerial difficulties. You get the feeling that his time has come and passed.

- Juan Carlos Gomez- Sinan Samil Sam: Rounding out this trio of heavyweight fights is a bout between Gomez and the unknown Sam. Well, lets be honest here, Gomez is unknown here too but at least he had 10 successful defenses as the WBC cruiserweight titlist. Sam, has never been seen by American audiences.

But again, what does it say that a former cruiserweight, above the age of 30, unknown to the public, is put on a show featuring heavyweight hopefuls?

It doesn't say a lot, but y'know what? It beats being on vacation.