

"He's The Tim Tebow of the Fight Game"--FOLSTAD on ANDRE WARD

Written by Rick Folstad

Wednesday, 04 January 2012 15:43



Andre Ward should stand up and take a well-deserved bow. He should flash a big smile, shake some hands, get a few pats on the back and then take home an award or two for being a hero and a role model. There aren't many of those guys left.

Ward is the kind of guy who would take in a stray dog or volunteer to play Santa Claus at an orphanage. He'd be a good guy to speak in front of a bunch of Boy Scouts, tell them about the importance of hard work and honesty, of doing things right and getting rewarded for it.

You'd trust Ward to borrow your car or hold your money or watch your kids. He isn't a fighter as much as he's a nice guy with a brutal occupation. He could knock your head into next October, but he'd charge into a burning building just to rescue your grandma's cat.

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In case you haven't noticed, boxing in this country has been in dire need of a hero for years. We don't have a Joe Louis or a Dempsey or a Marciano to cheer on anymore. Sugar Ray Leonard has long been retired along with Oscar De La Hoya and Marvelous Marvin Hagler. Floyd Mayweather Jr.? Calling Mayweather a role model is like calling Elmer Fudd a great hunter.

Sure, Mayweather can fight, but so could Sonny Liston, Mike Tyson and Genghis Khan, but I wouldn't want any of them serving as examples for my kids. Besides, women beaters like Mayweather don't sell well in places like Omaha, Austin and Topeka, even if you can fight. Especially if you can fight. Besides, Mayweather won't be available for goodwill work until later this spring. He's spending a good part of the next few months dressed in prison garb and eating three square stand-in-line meals a day. No more surf and turf for the Money man.

I'm not saying there aren't any other genuine heroes out there on boxing's landscape, but Ward has to be at or near the front of the line, and we should be pretty happy with the pick. He's one of the few fighters from this country who can both fight and carry on an intelligent conversation without the help of a long string of obscenities and a heavy dose of trash talk.

An Olympic Gold Medal winner and now the undefeated WBA and WBC super-middleweight champion (25-0, 13 KOs) following his win over Carl Froch last month in the Super Six World Boxing Classic, he's got championship numbers and a chaplain's demeanor.

Even if you had some crazy reason to think Ward wasn't the hero-type, that should have changed after the Froch fight. You can lift him up onto that pedestal now, carve out a bust of him and place it where everyone can see it. Because Ward apparently beat Froch with a busted left hand, and he didn't whine about it before the fight or after. He said he broke the hand about eight days before the fight, but didn't say anything. He just iced it down. He didn't want to see the fight postponed again.

That's a tough thing to do, win a fight with a fractured hand. That's like trying to win a war with a cap gun or trying to tame a lion with a fly swatter. And somehow doing it.

Ward won two big fights this year. Along with Froch, he beat Arthur Abraham in a fight earlier

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this year, Abraham one of the favorites to win the Super Six Classic. He's climbing higher up the pound-for-pound list with every fight. But if you ask him, he'll tell you he still has a little way to go.

A few things you might not know about Andre Ward: He won the Olympic Gold Medal in 2004 fighting as a light-heavyweight, and is the only US fighter to win a Gold Medal in the last decade. His amateur record was 110-5 and he didn't lose a fight between 1998 and 2004. Born in the San Francisco Bay area, he played running back and safety in high school. Deeply religious and a regular church goer, he says, "I'm a Christian who happens to be an athlete, not the other way around." He has a wife and three kids (two sons and a daughter) with a fourth child on the way. His fighting nickname is SOG, or Son of God. Soft-spoken and polite, he was recently named Sports Illustrated's Fighter of the Year. He was introduced to fighting at a young age by his late father Frank, and he still dedicates his fights to his Dad.

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Of course, his winning percentage is a little higher than Tebow's.

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Radam G says:

Just so you sucka will know, Tebow is Pinoy born, bread and feed. And he is a lefty. Holla!

brownsugar says:

Tebow was born in the PI,.. His parents were overseas evangelists,..
A very timely and enjoyable article.

Radam G says:

Danggit! B-Sug! Now you put up a foto of a gorgeous lady. C'mon, MAN! Don't be tryin' to make me get "jungle fever!" My ET wife is looking over my shoulder ready to go two to the torso and three to the noggin on my arse. Hehehehe! Holla!

Radam G says:

Tebow has a wonderful children's hospital in the P-Islands that he opened up not too long ago.

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His parents gave the P-Islands a wonderful native son. They couldn't do anything about where they were born, neither could he. I guess you can call Tebow a future Prez Obama of politics. I just know in 25 years or so that some nutcases in U.S. America are going to bring up his birth place and citizenship of his birth country. I guess it is a stank -- I mean Yank -- game.

[Tebow like Prez O is a dual citizen borne and bread in Asia on Asian food with Asian respect, aura and culture. They are a couple of Asian cats. So you U.S. mainlanders don't be trying to steal 'em and take the credit for their well being.] Holla!

Radam G says:

Pinoy TIME! Da Manny TIME! Tebow TIME! Lefty TIME! What TIME is IT! IT'S ASIAN TIME! Don't you suckas be trying to take that P-Islands born, reared and feed Tebow. Holla!