

Peterson vs. Jean: An Old-School Battle for National Pride

Written by Aaron Tallent
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The last junior welterweight champion to hail from Canada's Quebec province was Arturo Gatti, but Dierry Jean (25-0, 17 KO's) wants to change that on Saturday night.

"I just want to bring that belt home to Quebec, where it belongs," said Jean.

To do so, he will have to do it in our nation's capital against its current favorite son of boxing. Jean will be facing IBF Junior Welterweight champion Lamont Peterson (31-2-1, 16 KO's; *on left, with shorter Jean, right, in Tom Casino photo*), a Washington, D.C. native, at the D.C. Armory on Capitol Hill. Peterson won the title from Amir Kahn in December of 2011, at the Washington Convention Center and successfully defended it against Kendall Holt in 2013, at the Armory.

However, his last bout was a shocking third-round knockout at the hands of Lucas Matthyse at Atlantic City's Boardwalk Hall in May of 2013. Matthyse was the WBC Junior Welterweight champ at the time, but a unification bout was not allowed so the two met in a non-title fight.

"I never really left the gym since my last fight," said Peterson "I've been doing a lot of strength and conditioning, although at this point it's mostly boxing. Right now, I'm working on the game plan and making sure I execute when I get in the ring."

In Jean, a native of Haiti who moved to Quebec as a child with his family, Peterson faces an opponent whose career has been nothing but spectacular to date. After winning the Canadian national amateur title, Jean turned professional in 2006 and fought his first 24 bouts in Canada,

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winning them all. In May of 2013, Jean fought his first fight in the U.S. at the Buffalo Run Casino in Miami, Okla., where he knocked out Cleotis Pendarvis to become the number-one IBF contender.

"I think [Jean's] a good little fighter," said Barry Hunter, Peterson's trainer. "I'm not a huge film guy. We usually make adjustments in fights, but based off what I saw he's not great in one area but he's good in a lot of areas. He's hungry and he wants a title so it should make for a good fight."

Hungry is one way to describe Jean. Nasty is another. When the two joined a media conference call earlier this month, Jean started off by stating that in Peterson's mind, "he's not 100% okay" and that it would be a great opportunity to "remind him of the nightmare he took last time. "

"Who cares about what he thinks, what he says?" responded Peterson. "At the end of the day I have to get in there and show him. So it's not going to make me feel no type of way. He can say what he wants. It's all his perception at this point."

On paper, Peterson is nearly two years younger than Jean, but has far more experience against superior competition. Though Jean has gone mostly untested through his career, he has looked impressive against competition that has steadily improved as he has progressed. One thing is for certain: both boxers know that this is a watershed fight for each of them.

"We have over 100 people that have bought ringside tickets," said Jean. "We are doing everything the way we should be as if we are home. We are not here as tourists. We are here to get the job done, to take that belt and go back home with it."

While many of Jean's comments have focused on his pride for Canada's most separatist province, Peterson's camp understands the geographic significance of Saturday's bout.

"We've been through everything and we never really had the chance to fight at home. I told [Washington, D.C. Mayor Vincent Gray], what would be better than bringing the world title back to D.C.," said Hunter. "It's been a long time since D.C. had something to shout about and we

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want to bring it back.”

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brownsugar says:

This is going to be competitive.Jean is looking to build upon the fact that Peterson looked so horrible in his last fight and Lamont is feeling the pressure.

This fight has upset written all over it.