

WOODS: Ward Bent On Fighting Contract, I'd Prefer He'd Fight Kovalev

Written by Michael Woods
Friday, 30 May 2014 10:46



The second and third best super middles are fighting tomorrow, and that got me thinking about why the best super middle, **Andre Ward**, isn't in the mix for a meaningful fight.

Where's Ward?

Well, we heard from him right around the last Floyd Mayweather fight, which he attended. The Bay Area boxer said he was wanting a fight, but was blaming his promoter, **Dan Goossen**, for not making it happen.

Goossen, who worked a deal to get Ward almost \$2 million to fight ex Friday Night Fights vet **E dwin Rodriguez**

last fall, has been busy battling Ward in the legal arena, because Ward has declared that his contract with Goossen should be voided, for a couple reasons.

The California commission just ruled on that matter, back on April 30, and sided with Goossen. The CSAC's arbitrator, Andy Foster, the executive director for the agency, ruled that the contract is valid through Nov. 8, 2016, for the record.

Ward lost another commission hearing back in June 2013. He'd signed a contract extension with Goossen in 2011.

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Team Ward replied after the latest loss that they have just begun to fight...which is of course their right...but I have to admit, I'm not understanding the wisdom there.

You are 30-years-old, are regarded as most as one of the top five boxers in the world, but you are injury prone, and can't rely on being able to fight for that much longer, based on that injury history, and every month that passes without you fighting means more people forget about you. And your crew is declaring that you don't regard your promotional contract is valid...yet you want to work under the terms of the contract, with the promoter you have taken to court several times, and get another fight? Am I alone here, in not seeing the issue from the Ward stance all that well?

I put out an invite, which is a standing invite, to a Ward (26-0) rep to talk about this stuff, and if he wants the winner of the **Carl Froch-George Groves** rematch, and am hoping to hear back, to get some clarity. (Ward beat Froch via UD12 in Dec. 2011.) During the Froch-Groves II weigh-in, Froch promoter **Eddie Hearn** took a slap at Ward for being a poor product commercially, and someone who can't draw fans, which is why, he said, he's not so keen on a Froch-Ward rematch, if Ward wins, and he'd be more inclined to put together a domestic rivarly rumble, so I'd like to hear Wards' response...

I also phoned promoter Goossen, and he was not available for comment.

Team Ward, in a statement released after the Cali commission ruled against them most recently, said that, "*Dan (Goossen) said that he would continue to pursue fights for Andre but since the Rodriguez bout, he has been unable to deliver.*" I couldn't get Goossen on the record, but I am thinking that the promoter was able to get him almost \$2 million to fight E-Rod...and also, I know a market doesn't like uncertainty, and am curious whether an HBO or a Showtime would even want to consider a large lump payment for a Ward event if Team Ward is keen on continuing to seek the nullification of his contract with Goossen. Might that not be a humongous impediment to anyone seeking to put together a Ward bout, and if yes, who should receive blame for that? The release, from attorney **Josh Dubin** and advisor **James Prince**, also stated: "*Andre is looking forward to continuing the journey with all of his fans as soon as possible, and as always, is ready to face the best in the boxing world has to offer.*"

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"

Let me be clear, I'm rooting for the same thing. I'd LOVE to see a **Ward-Gennady Golovkin** fight, or Ward move up to face a **Bernard Hopkins**

, or a

Sergey Kovalev

. I think, built correctly, one or more of those bouts could even do some pay-per-view business. But it goes without saying that those bouts won't get made while the boxer is seemingly concentrating on fighting a contractual, rather than an in-ring, battle.

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deepwater2 says:

Good article.

A contract is a contract. If the contract was violated then the court would have ruled that it was violated. The contract stands. Ward can barley sell tickets to his hometown and Goosen has done a wonderful job with him. I fell out of my seat when Ward called Froch vs Groves just a domestic fight. 80,000 seats sold and the entire world is anticipating this bout.

Ward doesn't smile, his boxing style does not elicit too many cheers. The average Joe at the mall would not recognize Ward from the guy selling sneakers at foot locker.

Get in the ring Ward and make fans look forward to watching you. Goosen did his job now you do your job.

brownsugar says:

As always Deep makes an excellent point.

But i differ with the perspective that Ward is the sole culprit involved.

He is known for being articulate and his positive on screen presence is commanding to say the least.

Also skinnin' and grinnin' doesn't always attract fans.

Miguel " I-work-for-the-company" Cotto is the most sullen and aloof boxer in existence and he has a dynamic fan base with overlapping demographics.

Surly fighters like Larry Holmes were a regular TV attraction for years.

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And while it may seem that Andre Ward is being a diva attempting to override the boundaries of a signed legal contract, SOG Ward still hasn't disclosed the entire reasoning for the lawsuit.

Its easy to get the label of being a primo Donna without receiving the benefit of a doubt because he is after all basically " just another jock ".

Ward has always been considered by and large as a man of principal, integrity, and principal. He has stated multiple times that even though he is in the midst of a legal conflict with Goosen, he has communicated regularly with Goosen that he is ready to fight practically anyone as of yesterday.

Go ask GGG, Regale, Groves, and Froch why they refused him. Go ask Goosen why he hasn't found a suitable opponent?

Its not like Ward is on strike or has boycotted the professional ranks.

And he has indicated that he can't discuss all the details in full measure. Whether he's taking a stand on principal or being ill-advised I don't think the public really knows.

Until something concrete is learned I think the press should be patient instead of jumping to conclusions

Its not like Ward is using armoured trucks to transport vaccumed packed containers of brand new \$100.00 bills to subsidize the incomes of starving strippers every weekend.

The Shadow says:

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I just love this. Your posts are worth a price of admission alone.

And I disagree with what was said earlier - Ward HAS done his job.

He's beaten everyone, won the Super Six, he's stayed in the public eye. He fought injured where other fighters can be unreliable.

Also, he's landed himself a nice gig on HBO - keeping him more visible - through his own efforts: networking, being a mentee of Al Bernstein, getting an INTERNSHIP to learn the craft and then doing his job as a broadcaster.

Technically, Goossen hasn't done his. Not lately, anyway. They agreed to work together during arbitration, so both parties could get paid, but Goossen hasn't offered one fight since last year.

Whatever people make of the fact that he's suing Goossen, if they agreed to work together with legal work impending, well, then Goossen's job is to offer the fighter fights.

He hasn't done that.

And the fighter's job is to fight. The promoter's job is to make people want to come watch him. I think that's the crux of the issue.

amayseng says:

Does anyone know what Goosen has done to warrant such litigation?

Why is Ward not pleased?

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Its not like Ward is using armoured trucks to transport vaccumed packed containers of brand new \$100.00 bills to subsidize the incomes of starving strippers every weekend.[/QUOTE]

Hehehehehe! SOG ain't Money May. But that is classic: "...using armoured trucks to transport vaccumed packed containers of brand new \$100 bills to subsidize the incomes of starving strippers...."

Man, those strippers are too BIG-A\$\$ packing PHAT to be doing too much starving. Wow! My eyeballs were a 5.9 on the Richter Scale the other day after watching those strippers shaky SHAKE those BIG bootahs for Money May's rain of Benjamins.

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There ought to be a law against dames, damsels and dolls causing innocent dudes earthquake EYES. WTF! Hahaha! Just the thought is giving me after effects. Holla![/QUOTE]

You'll need to take some billberry root and luten to keep from going blind eyeballing all that luscious scenery RG.....lol

Im meant to say "Starving Gold Diggers" Those dames are hungry and thirstyall the time lol.

And the say nobody tips like Money May....(the best tipper ever)

stormcentre says:

So far Ward's contract and legal position, from what I understand, has not been properly assessed by anyone not possibly influenced by promoters and/or Goosen.

Athletic Commissions and the like are not courts.

Furthermore, I doubt they can really assess all the complexities of contract law; particularly if they can't get the administration of drug testing and judging consistently right.

In simple terms, Ward is claiming there is, effectively, a 7 year expiry on most and also his promotional contract with Goosen)and/or or his promotional company).

That law 7 year law (my term) does exist and from what I have read on this matter so far no one that has heard the matter between Ward and Goosen has really explained why Ward's claim is not supported in terms of that law.

Gossen has probably done a good job with promoting Ward. In fact I think he has.

But that fact is that I don't really know that for sure.

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Ward, may have been able to make millions more than he has been already paid by Goosen since that 7 year expiry date has passed, and that may be the issue here.

How often do you hear of fighters earning really good money but still not getting all they could due to promoters not revealing all the income sources and/or not paying them all they're worth? Sometimes the disparity is millions of dollars, as there is that much money in this sport and promoting it, that it's not funny.

That would be, in my opinion, one reason why the 7 year expiry date law would exist with such contracts and agreement - so fighters aren't pinned to a promoter and/or contract that doesn't recognize their current fame, popularity, ability and revenue generating capacity.

Anyway, whether Gossen has promoted Ward well or not - which is not necessarily the case at hand - clearly Ward and him are not in agreement about monetary, promotional, and other related matters

My take on it is that Ward simply wants to earn as much money as he can at this stage of his life and in the limited time his career may have remaining in it that he can successfully box.

Additionally, I also expect that Ward feels he can take things to the next level, with respect to fame, popularity, and his income generating capacity, particularly with Floyd looking at retiring soon.

The difference between Ward remaining under the same contract or not, could literally be millions. Or it may not.

I like Ward and perhaps I'm just siding with the boxer too much.

That said, when people realize how much money promoters can and do make out of a fighter and you also define what they pay the fighter in percentage terms of that; it can be quite surprising how little the fighter really gets.

There are quite a few really lucrative income streams that some promoters have available to them, and these are not always made obvious to the guy taking the punches and injuries.

stormcentre says:

Oh I would like to see Ward fight Kovalev though

oubobcat says:

If I am not mistaken, didn't Ward sign the extension with Goosen just prior to the Dawson fight? And then relatively shortly after signing that extension, seek to exit that contract. My guess is that someone else got in his ear and started making some very big promises to him. Ward, as a businessman, decided in his mind he should have the right to go this direction and thus is trying to find anyway out of the Goosen contract.

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Ward made 2 million dollars to fight Edwin Rodriguez working with Goosen. He should think about that. A lot of money for an easy nights work.

One way or another, Ward needs to find a way back into the ring and soon. He is doing his career a major disservice by sitting on the sidelines so long. Eddie Hearn was correct in his statement that Ward has a very hard time selling tickets. Staying out of the ring for extended periods of time will do nothing to help build your marketability amongst the fans.

deepwater2 says:

Bravo oubobcat . I could not have said it better myself.

The Shadow says:

Yes, he resigned in the spring of 2011. The issue has been with the extension and the management of Andre Ward's career since his extension.

(This is usually the time where a promoter starts to see substantial return on their early investments into a fighter's career. Not all that coincidentally, as a fighter becomes privy to the total pool of money in a promotion, this is also the time issues often arise between a fighter and a promoter. A very similar scenario happened with Mikkel Kessler who was sidelined for a long time with interestingly similar public criticisms.)

OK, so I asked around and did some digging.

From what I can gather, the issues are plentiful with the general gist of them being these:

Apparently, Dan Goossen -- like many promoters with a franchise player -- has been using Ward as a negotiation and bargaining chip to secure TV-slots for other fighters under his umbrella.

In addition, much to Ward's chagrin, Goossen -- who contrary to popular belief is only Ward's co-promoter, equal with the other promotional stakeholder Antonio Leonard -- has been holding meetings with HBO "behind" the backs of the rest of the Andre Ward organization.

Moreover, Leonard, who put up one equal half of a substantial six-figure signing bonus for Ward -- the other half coming from Goossen Tutor -- was stiffed on his percentage by Goossen, something Ward has been extremely unhappy with.

To make matters worse, after meeting the terms of this deal in the Chad Dawson fight, Goossen informed co-promoter Leonard -- Ward's friend and business partner -- that Goossen Tutor no longer intended to honor this 50-50 profit sharing agreement moving forward.

In fact, this prompted Leonard to file a suit against Goossen. For curious souls, I can probably dig up the legal papers somewhere...

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On top of all this, the Ward camp ultimately feels Goossen has failed to capitalize on the momentum from the Super Six win and his subsequent ascent up the pound for pound ranking.

(Interestingly enough, Ward was ranked 10 prior to facing Froch. The win jumped him to fifth-place while the Dawson destruction saw Ward surge to No. 2 after Floyd Mayweather. On a completely different note, this should tell you the fickle concept of ranking pound for pound fighters...)

The Ward team feels their fighter should be promoted better and command much bigger purses. His fights, according to what I hear, usually have a modest marketing budget; no billboards, few posters, media spots and things of that nature.

With Ward's upside, his team believes, quite frankly, that he should be a PPV fighter at this point.

Regardless of what people say about Ward's style, Mayweather is constantly criticized for being boring, yet remains the biggest PPV draw by far. For that reason, the team argues, the "boring" argument isn't a legitimate drawback for his lack of opportunities.

For those who say Ward should be more "villanous", there is also a case to be made that Ward could have tapped into the fanbase that fueled fellow Olympic gold medalist and HBO analyst Sugar Ray Leonard's career. Either way, the job hasn't been done, people say.

Since the Edwin Rodriguez fight, Goossen has failed to even offer Ward a fight in relatively loaded pool of commercially viable talent that includes Carl Froch, Gennady Golovkin, George Groves, Julio Cesar Chavez, Mikkel Kessler, Jean Pascal, Lucian Bute, Adonis Stevenson and several others.

On the other hand, his team -- manager James Prince and Leonard -- has managed to capitalize on Ward's success by securing significant endorsement deals with both Everlast and Jordan Brand as well as a high-profile analyst gig with HBO.

With no promotional dollars spent on marketing and no fights on the horizon, Goossen hasn't managed to keep up with the moves made by the rest of the team, the team argues.

Ultimately, according to their agreement, Goossen's job is to secure fights and promote Ward and build his brand.

So it isn't as much Ward suing his promoter; it's more a matter of Ward and his co-promoter looking to annul an agreement with the other co-promoter the Ward side considers 1) not met, 2) abused and 3) breached.

Hope that clears things up somewhat.

The Shadow says:

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FWIW, from what I heard, the one who was "whispering in Ward's ear" was actually Bob Arum and Top Rank, much like they did with Tim Bradley.

The Commish says:

Ward can keep fighting his promotional contract, but he'd be better off fighting in the ring, instead. If he doesn't, he'll be sitting on his butt for quite a long time.

I've been through these promotional contract battles before. Fighters do win, but their victories are few and far between. To me, this doesn't seem like a winnable battle. I'd rather see Ward against GGG, Sergei Kovalev or Bernard Hopkins. At least he has a chance against them.

Against Dan Goossen, his odds drop drastically!

-Randy G.

Radam G says:

[QUOTE=The Commish;54015]Ward can keep fighting his promotional contract, but he'd be better off fighting in the ring, instead. If he doesn't, he'll be sitting on his butt for quite a long time.

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-Randy G.[/QUOTE]

Remove the "n" off his last name and you get Goose, but spelled with two "s." And TRUE DAT! That Goosse(n) won't give up a golden egg when you are battling with his arse. Holla!

stormcentre says:

Oh, well I didn't know that Ward had signed an extension to the 7 year deal.

Let me read up on the posts and other stuff, and I will reply them.

stormcentre says:

[QUOTE=The Shadow;54007]

Apparently, Goossen has/had a cash flow problem and has/had to use a line of credit to pay for the Ward fights until the total fight revenues came/come in from HBO, gate, sponsorships and so forth.

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Legal quarrels or not, if this is true, it makes even less sense for Goossen not to secure fights for Ward.

[/QUOTE]

Good research there.

It may be - with respect to what's quoted above - that Goosen is looking to not mitigate his losses.

Even though he knows he should.

It happens when the waters get dark and muddy.

Skibbz says:

[QUOTE=oubobcat;53996]If I am not mistaken, didn't Ward sign the extension with Goosen just prior to the Dawson fight? And then relatively shortly after signing that extension, seek to exit that contract. My guess is that someone else got in his ear and started making some very big promises to him. Ward, as a businessman, decided in his mind he should have the right to go this direction and thus is trying to find anyway out of the Goosen contract.

Ward made 2 million dollars to fight Edwin Rodriguez working with Goosen. He should think about that. A lot of money for an easy nights work.

One way or another, Ward needs to find a way back into the ring and soon. He is doing his career a major disservice by sitting on the sidelines so long. Eddie Hearn was correct in his statement that Ward has a very hard time selling tickets. Staying out of the ring for extended periods of time will do nothing to help build your marketability amongst the fans.[/QUOTE]

Exactly, especially when in other sports you see athletes competing week in week out, to sit out for 2 years doesn't keep the interest of your fans.

Everyone wants to see him back in the ring, but Ward. He's not content with \$2m, the song and dance he's got going makes it seem he's not content with anything less than \$10m! Ridiculous. Get yourself in the ring, fight two or three times a year and you'll be making \$10m a year. More fights, more wins, more fans.... PPV's.... then more more money!

Radam G says:

[QUOTE=oubobcat;53996]If I am not mistaken, didn't Ward sign the extension with Goosen just prior to the Dawson fight? And then relatively shortly after signing that extension, seek to exit that contract. My guess is that someone else got in his ear and started making some very big promises to him. Ward, as a businessman, decided in his mind he should have the right to go this direction and thus is trying to find anyway out of the Goosen contract.

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Nyet! I don't know, O-Cat. He could be doing himself a great in service. There is a graveyard trail of pugs sitting on the sidelines for extended times for whatever reasons and coming back to make killing in the moolah department.

Those that come to mind would be Jack Demsey, GOAT Ali, Sugar Ray Leonard, Rev. "Big" George Foreman and the two-year retirement of Money May to name a few. Holla!

The Shadow says:

[QUOTE=Radam G;54088]Nyet! I don't know, O-Cat. He could be doing himself a great in service. There is a graveyard trail of pugs sitting on the sidelines for extended times for whatever reasons and coming back to make killing in the moolah department.

Those that come to mind would be Jack Demsey, GOAT Ali, Sugar Ray Leonard, Rev. "Big" George Foreman and the two-year retirement of Money May to name a few. Holla![/QUOTE]

Mikkel Kessler did the exact same thing.

Mogens Palle had monopolized the Scandinavian boxing scene by using the Don King business model of operating as manager and promoter. He would stage frequent shows, match his fighters lightly but paying them peanuts.

However, their records would be spectacularly padded and they would have steady work.

Then he would cash them out, giving them a substantial pay rise from the measly purses to which they were accustomed -- and reap massive profits in the process for himself!

Ayub Kalule got cashed out vs. Sugar Ray, Gert Bo Jakobsen got cashed out vs Geg Haugen, Jimmi Bredahl with Oscar De La Hoya, Brian Nielsen with Mike Tyson and so forth.

In Kessler, he had a jewel so he was building to a SUPER cash-out in Wales vs. Joe Calzaghe. That's just his model.

Now, he paid Kessler a career-high purse and, initially, he was happy.

Until later when he discovered Palle hadn't disclosed how much money was in the pot. Instead of thinking the \$5m purse was a nice payday, he realized how many MILLIONS Palle had hid from him and taken himself. More than Kessler earned, in all likelihood.

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Now that is Palle's right as a promoter if he can negotiate it; he negotiates with the fighter's manager.

However since he had installed his daughter as Kessler's manager -- a la Don and Carl King -- the manager had not upheld her fiduciary duty to the fighter and thus creating a conflict of interest.

Along comes Sauerland and tells him the business, total transparency and the lure of the Super Six in America. Kessler was frustrated with Palle's seeming inability (or unwillingness) to secure Kessler fights on American premium cable.

All in all, Kessler sat out for a long time, amid criticism such as the ones Ward faces now, and at the end of the day, it paid off. He now gets a much bigger pie of PPV, where they charge over \$100 a pop and he's a fixture on HBO.

It was worth it for him.

The Shadow says:

[QUOTE=stormcentre;54059]Good research there.

It may be - with respect to what's quoted above - that Goosen is looking to not mitigate his losses.

Even though he knows he should.

It happens when the waters get dark and muddy.[/QUOTE]

Thanks. Overall, Goossen decided to not meet the agreement with the co-promoter, Ward's friend, who is now suing for damages. Much of the stuff I wrote can be found in the lawsuit as well.

But yeah, he's trying to ride the gravy train for as long as he can.

Radam G says:

[QUOTE=The Shadow;54094]Thanks. Overall, Goossen decided to not meet the agreement with the co-promoter, Ward's friend, who is now suing for damages. Much of the stuff I wrote can be found in the lawsuit as well.

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Tricks of The Trade are often stealthily riding, sliding and gliding in every facet of the "Hurt Business [hurt bitnezz]." And at least half the time, it is not the fist shots to the torso and noggin, but the crooked hurt-bitnezz missiles to the trusting heart and your wallet/purse/pocket. Holla!

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oubobcat says:

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Ward is in the prime of his career and losing valuable time. This is the time where he can be making statements and building his marketability into becoming a big time ppv attraction.

The difference between his time out of the ring and Mayweather's is that when Mayweather "retired" he was already a ppv star. Ward is an extremely talented fighter but not a star. He was becoming one after the Dawson fight but then his career more or less came to a screeching halt. Now he has to somewhat hit the reset button.

I read Shadow's post about the contract and if true Ward has some valid concerns. However, we are not always happy in life with people we work with or work for (not saying Goosen is his boss but I think you get my drift). There are times we need to suck it up in life in a bad situation, get through that situation and be better in the end because of it.

If Ward really wanted to fight right now, it would happen. Mark my words, it would happen. He doesn't though because it would have to be under Goosen.

Ward needs to do his talking inside the ring. If he truly believes he is a major ppv star, start acting like one. Go out and show the world in the prime of your career how good you are. And you what, before you know if that contract will be over, you will be making millions and millions of dollars and Goosen won't be getting a penny (and will be kicking himself immensely for how he handled the situation).

But sitting on the sidelines and complaining about your work conditions after you made 2 million for an easy fight does not look good. Period. Even if there are some issues with the way the contract is playing itself out at the moment.

The Shadow says:

[QUOTE=oubobcat;54124]Ward is in the prime of his career and losing valuable time. This is the time where he can be making statements and building his marketability into becoming a big time ppv attraction.

The difference between his time out of the ring and Mayweather's is that when Mayweather "retired" he was already a ppv star. Ward is an extremely talented fighter but not a star. He was becoming one after the Dawson fight but then his career more or less came to a screeching halt. Now he has to somewhat hit the reset button.

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Friday, 30 May 2014 10:46

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Cat, he's been willing and able to fight under Goossen's banner since his last fight. He DESPERATELY wants to fight. He's been in fighting/camp shape since December.

All issues aside, Goossen agreed that they would work together during the arbitration but he has yet to offer one fight, which is fishy seeing as the HBO brass have a strange, borderline perverse man crush on Ward.

He wants to fight. They've agreed to move forward while the legal stuff sorts itself out. But he's had no offers aside from a non-offer to come to Denmark and face Mikkel Kessler.

Also, to clarify, he doesn't believe that he's a PPV star. But his team feels that with his upside, he should've at least been promoted better and had fights to push him forward, not backwards.

Just like Tim Bradley requested when he was with the Thompson crew. With Ward, they haven't really tapped into a big buying audience in the boxing public.

He's even said that he's willing to take fights now that are steps back, just to stay active.

The Good Doctor says:

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I have heard almost the exact same sentiment Shadow. The interesting thing about Ward is that inactivity is all perception and not reality. He is only 8 months from his last fight and if you go back three years from now he has averaged a fight every 9 months which is more active than a lot of guys are. I think what may be worrying the informed boxing public is his possible inactivity to come.

stormcentre says:

Here's a little story about a guy called Kostya Tszyu - it has some relevance to that which we're discussing.

When he first came to Australia he was promoted by Bill Mordey and trained/managed by John Lewis.

Initially the contract between Mordey and Kostya Tszyu was adhered to and worked quite well for all involved. As Kostya Tszyu was simply on another level to what most boxing aficionados in Australia at that time had seen before.

After his performance of not only utterly dominating Vernon Forrest at the 1991 amateur world championships in Australia - but also using a very skilled guy like Forrest and the fight in general to showcase footwork and punching skills that for the most part were and even today are virtually unseen and unheard of in any form, whether it be professional or amateur boxing; Lewis and Mordey decided to offer him a deal and even at that stage of his career he was effectively considered to already be a master boxer of sorts.

Fenech was big time then, and not only was he a very good small version of Rocky Marciano but he also had a unique metabolism that allowed him to easily fight at one or two weight divisions lower than his natural weight.

Those two characteristics, plus Jeff's - even for a boxer - extremely high *stamina and *fitness allowed him to dominate opponents in way and style that appealed to Mike Tyson. It also allowed Kostya Tszyu to be an ideally sized sparring partner for Jeff.

Anyway ,to get an idea of Fenech's stamina and fitness check out Fenech's fight against

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Marcos Villasana.

At the time Villasana was a pretty good tough Mexican warrior with a do or die mentality.

Villasana's chin and will - similar to Fenech's - was like granite.

That Throughout the whole fight with Villasana, Jeff hardly ever stopped throwing punches; that's almost 60 seconds, every minute, every round, times twelve.

The look on Villasana's face from the intensity of the fight and Jeff Fenech was that of utter disbelief, as Jeff's punch output was simply that incredible. Same for the response from the ringside commentators at the time.

It was Fenech's unique metabolism that allowed him to easily fight at one or two weight divisions lower than his natural weight that was also why his demise happened fairly quickly - which in itself is not an entirely uncommon occurrence although it often appears as a sporting phenomenon in boxing when a guy whom was previously dominating and invincible, simply seems to have lost it all overnight; something that can be considered to be the opposite of what we were discussing here.

[url]<http://www.thesweetscience.com/forums/showthread.php?15425-Can-someone-explain-this-to-me-about-Sergio-Martinez&p=53746&viewfull=1%20-%20post53746>

And because of these considerations, as soon as Jeff started to find it hard to keep the weight off - and it happens to almost everyone whether they easily operate in divisions that are naturally lower than their weight or not - and had to move up because of that; all of a sudden Jeff was more susceptible to the techniques, game-plans, and styles of his opponents.

Opponents, say, like Azumah Nelson.

You see, before Jeff's metabolism stopped doing exactly what Jeff wanted and started doing as nature intended - which was an event that coincided with Jeff's hands requiring more surgery and attention - which itself was a consideration that didn't sit well with the need to punch harder to keep the bigger/heavier guys off him (regardless of whether Jeff threw a lot of punches per round or not; which he did) as he was forced to move up in weight divisions; Jeff found it relatively easy to keep the weight off.

Then, in that situation, it really didn't matter if someone got on the inside of his jab and slid their right cross through that opening and landed hard onto his jaw line - or even if they followed it up with a hook (see the Villasana fight); as guys at that weight and a few significant pounds below Jeff simply couldn't hurt him then.

He would walk right through them.

This resulted in Jeff developing a very crowd pleasing style that had absolutely nothing to do

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with (seriously) concerning Fenech about defence - characteristics boxing fans loves, particularly those that adore the Mexican style of fighting.

So, in other words at the latter stage of his career Jeff Fenech needed to not fight technicians and/or KO artists, and he needed to stay away from guys with top level experience that operated in Jeff's natural weight division; until, at least, he learned defence - or even recognized the requirement for it.

Something Steward was hoping to assist Jeff with.

However, by the time Fenech got to Emmanuel Steward the dye had already set and Jeff's mauling and crowd pleasing style just couldn't be changed that much.

Particularly when he was under pressure, and boxing rings and world title fights are simply no place to hide from pressure.

So in there, Jeff reverted back to what he knew best. Or worse still a random mix of that and the style Steward was trying to indoctrinate him with.

The result was not always pretty.

It was one that revealed how Jeff was all of a sudden vulnerable in ways he had never imagined of, and if that were not concerning enough his hands could no longer change the intent of his opponents or even their corners' game-plan.

The roles were now reversed for Jeff Fenech.

When Kostya Tszyu came to the Newtown gym it was before these changes had started to manifest themselves and sink in for Jeff, and he did very little for Jeff's confidence.

Tszyu didn't find Fenech technically difficult, wasn't intimidated by him, he sometimes schooled Fenech, and he even cracked and/or broke Jeff's ribs before a major fight causing it to be postponed.

Whilst it was not exactly what Jeff wanted from a "sparring partner" in terms of work and (contained) publicity, it was nonetheless nothing short of a sensation to someone walking into Mayweather's gym and giving him good enough work to make him quit.

It just doesn't (usually) happen.

Particularly given that Kostya Tszyu, upon his arrival, was still really an amateur.

And particularly since Kostya, very noticeably, hadn't even worked hard to do that to Jeff.

He was just stepping around Jeff, making him miss, and putting shots where he wanted and as hard as he wanted.

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And the worse thing about it all for Fenech, was that Kostya Tszuyu, completely new to the gym, did it all without being intimidated like someone new might have otherwise been with the whole situation and Fenech's reputation.

Tszuyu simply treated Jeff like he was Hector Lopez or Jake Rodriguez.

This helped Jeff understand his time was up and that he needed to avoid guys that could fight, even a little bit, like Kostya Tszuyu.

Particularly if they campaigned at Fenech's weight.

Fenech and Kostya became friends from it all - just like Oscar and Bernard did after their fight, and Fenech (it is reported) informed that Kostya Tszuyu that he may be able to cut a better promotional deal with others, of which Vlad Warton was one; than he had at the time.

A deal that gave him instant USA exposure on a prime time network.

And Kostya, coming from extreme poverty in Siberia and not really knowing how big business of any kind worked, but also being acutely aware that most champions and contenders out there . . . he had either already sparred/fought them, or flogged someone that has and/or can; started to become aware that he may be worth a lot more than he was getting paid.

Especially considering how much Jeff earned at the time and given that Kostya was not only easily handling Fenech and anyone else he brought to camp from USA or elsewhere for training and sparring - but also pretty much anyone that walked in the gym; on a weekly or any other basis you care to name.

Almost any and every imported USA sparring partner Fenech brought in, whilst Kostya Tszuyu was there at the same time, repetitively said whilst there and also left Australia saying, "that Russian light welterweight is death in gloves and destined to be a world champion".

Tszuyu listened to Fenech, broke ties with Bill Mordey and then found himself in receipt of a writ that, once heard by a court, ruled in favor of Mordey and effectively resulted in Kostya Tszuyu owing Bill Mordey the best part of \$5M big ones; if my memory serves me correctly.

It meant Kostya Tszuyu was, financially, owned by Mordey whilst he was legally bound to his new promotional and managerial team. The outcome also meant that Tszuyu would be fighting for a few years to pay of the damages the court had awarded Mordey.

The difficulty Kostya Tszuyu faced training and preparing whilst all the friction existed between Lewis, Fenech, Mordey and himself, before the court case, during it, and also after it; was tremendous.

Kostya Tszuyu didn't know who to trust, whether he had been misled, and he effectively found himself fighting, for a few years, to pay back Mordey.

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It was like he didn't own his own life, and it put an entirely new and bitter slant on fighting for money and feeding his family that way.

It was also a strong lesson in how extremely difficult this game can be at the top (or any other) level, training, preparing and competing; when you are not at one with those whom are managing and controlling your career, and therefore your life.

You can read into it several different things with the Ward Strongly Goosen matter we have been discussing.

One could say that Kostya Tszyu should have just played the hand he was dealt - as many are saying about Ward and Goosen.

Or one could also say that Kostya Tszyu was right to change from Mordey, as it was obvious from the whole exercise how extremely difficult this game can be, training, preparing and competing when you are not getting along with those whom are managing and controlling your career - but that Kostya Tszyu should have just approached the matter better and with more legal advice, and possibly advice from someone that spoke his language.

I think Ward, now that Leonard is jilted from what Goosen is said to have done, finds it very difficult to commit to his art and schedule with Goosen - in a similar way that Kostya Tszyu did.

I think Ward finds it difficult to push himself whilst his mind is not free and there is a trust issue.

I think also that Ward doesn't want this to result in him losing focus before a big fight where he perhaps finds himself in there in the middle of a fight making mistakes, forgetting what he knows, and possibly losing as a result of all that; just as Kostya Tszyu did with Vince Philips after the above-mentioned matters all took place.

These things do affect you.

Remember when you have had really bad news? So bad you knew it was not worth training and sparring, so you miss that session?

These things, depending on the person and issue, can be like that - but sustained.

I think Ward has received good legal advice about the 7 year term and/or extension and that he believes he has a case and legal rights that deserve to be exercised.

I think he believes that, since the issue is over money and for the most part he only fights for money anyway, if he wins the legal battle he will be compensated for loss of earnings, and whilst it all happens he's not taking shots, he's healing, and he's staying handy sparring and in the gyms - which you can do - as Floyd Mayweather has shown.

You can go from gym to gym and get some pretty good work in like that - where it can closely

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compensate for not fighting regularly.

Particularly if the gyms you go to want to make sure you know their hierarchical order.

Of course I don't have a crystal ball and I don't really know the future, but I think Ward will come out of it all pretty good and go onto bigger and better things.

Ward can easily fill the void of Mayweather when Floyd retires, or before. Particularly if he is promoted by someone that's also managing Mayweather.

Furthermore, it's not hard to imagine Ward easily re-entering big time boxing with a couple of really well managed and promoted fights with guys like say, Stevenson and Kovalev whom (if it is the Ward that beat Dawson, Kessler, Abraham and Froch), even if Ward doesn't win, I can't really see him getting beat up.

A couple of warm up fights first and then Ward should be fine.

I mean imagine a fight between Ward and Golovkin, that would be huge and the Ward that fought Abraham would be not be an easy night out for 3G in my humble opinion.

Radam G says:

Good stuff, Storm. I agree with you. "SOG" Ward can get back in the mix quickly. After all, fighting is what he knows. But distractions like not having your way with the money that you make for all the concerned parties can cause hardships in training no doubt. Holla!

Skibbz says:

Really interesting post Storm, Kostya had some tough times but he was a fighter through it all, he was determined to realise his true potential and worked hard day in day out.

After all the heartbreak and agony, he still came back and unified the division, throwing himself deep into the ranks of the greatest in boxing history. Them two right hands that sent Judah into limbo still shock me to this day for how powerful they were.

I think Ward can be a big star, but not everyone that watches boxing watches it to for the love of the sport. Some watch it for the entertainment of seeing two guys go at it. It doesn't mean much to them what they've had to endure through training, what they're getting paid or who they're suing. All they care to see is a fight, an entertaining one. Ward is a winner no doubt, but to take the reigns at the head of the boxing world you can't just be a perfect technical boxer, you've got to bring entertainment to the show!

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stormcentre says:

@ RG

Yes, particularly for spiritual guys like Ward.

They rely on feeling good, free and positive to do their thing.

Big fights are hard to get up for when you're negative, as even in lesser fights often to win you have to believe you can do the "impossible".

How do you do that when you're feeling down and negative?

stormcentre says:

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Agreed.

Radam G says:

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Boxers since time immemorial have fought feeling down, negative and dejected by use of good humor and comedy. Laughing and jiving and conniving is the stabilizing force for a harden boxer. Don't forget that we can flip from killer to kind and gentle and vice versa in a sec.

Laughter calms the savage beast. There is nothing like beating the heck outta a punching bag or sparringmate and somebody comes up with the more insane joke known to man, and halt you in mid flow to laugh your bottom off. Holla!

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Yes I agree.

But equally so, if you have a big fight coming up and you have the choice of;

- a) Everything in your life going smoothly and to plan.
- b) Everything in your life going not smoothly and not to plan.

During the 6 week lead up and/or camp.

I know what I would prefer.

How about you?

Radam G says:

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We always prefer the best of the best, but sometimes you know we have to put on a mask. And complete the task. Sometimes you just have to keep a stiff upper lip. And let absolutely nothing make you flip.

Just imagine the horror of Buster Douglas when his mother died while he was in Tokyo weeks from fighting "Iron" Mike Tyson. And way, way back in the day, Howard Davis Jr's mommy died while he still had two bouts to go to win the 1976 O-Games gold medal.

Boxing is a metaphor for life. You must go on until it is over. Holla!