Written by Rick Folstad
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Anyone here think Holyfield could pull it off, get another title crack and grab a belt?Pop quiz: Who is Lionel Byarm and what does he have to do with aging fighters, auspicious beginnings, world championships and the 1984 Olympics?

Hint: He's a former cruiserweight out of Philadelphia nicknamed The Boiler. In the 1980s he fought several times at the old Blue Horizon.

Beeeeep.

Give up? Lionel Byarm was the guy Evander Holyfield beat in his pro debut back on Nov. 15,

1984 in Madison Square Garden.

If you didn't know the answer - if you didn't know Lionel Byarm from Lionel Barrymore - don't worry. That's a healthy sign.

If you did know who Byarm is and you're not a close friend or a family member, you've been spending too much time reading boxing publications and hanging around boxing gyms.

Remember the year 1984? Well, some of you do. That's the year my 26-year-old son was born.

Twenty-six years.

Ronald Reagan was president, Amadeus won the Oscar for best picture, and some of the hit songs of the year included "Jump" by Van Halen, "Ghostbusters" by Ray Parker Jr., and "When Doves Cry," by the singer formerly known as Prince.

And Holyfield made his pro debut, winning a six-round decision over Byarm.

Reagan is no longer with us, Byarm retired from the ring 22 years ago, the songs are all golden oldies, and Holyfield is somehow still at it, still mixing it up. Still chasing after world heavyweight titles at the staggering age of 48.

Does Bernard Hopkins know about this guy?

Holyfield is set to defend his World Boxing Federation heavyweight title against Sherman "Tank" Williams on Jan. 22 on pay-per-view from The Greenbrier's' Colonial Hall in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. It's a rare match-up between a guy who is very old in fighter years against a guy who is just a little old in fighter years.

Williams is only 38, making him a spring chicken compared to "The Real (old) Deal."

The fight is called "Redemption in America: The Journey Begins Now," which is a catchy slogan until you realize it's a little late for Holyfield to be starting out on any kind of journey. He's at that age where going to the kitchen for a cold beer can seem like a long trip for some of us.

What the journey refers to is Holyfield's quest to become heavyweight champion of the world. Again.

I think a better slogan would have been, "Retirement in America: It's been a Fun Ride, But I'm Tired Now and Going to Bed."

Twenty-six years.

That's a long time to be lacing them up until you realize Holyfield has only had 55 fights in that period, which averages out to about two fights a year. Not a busy dance card. Willie Pep had

almost 70 fights just between 1952 and 1958. Wear and tear shouldn't be a major problem.

Holyfield is like Hopkins. He's one of those aging legends you kind of forget about until they're suddenly scheduled for another fight. That's when you scratch your head and say, "Didn't he retire two years ago?"

Nope. He's just been waiting for the right time and the right fight.

As for Williams, he doesn't bring to mind one of the Klitschkos. Maybe the best thing you can say about him is that he went the distance - an eight-rounder - against former world champion Ruslan Chagaev, who is about as well-known in this country as my mailman.

Still, Williams is looking at this fight as a chance to beat a future Hall of Famer.

"I'm excited about this fight," he said. "Not just because I'm fighting Holyfield, but what beating him impressively or knocking him out can do for me. It can get me in a better position to fight Vitali Klitschko or David Haye. They've been fighting hand-picked looney tunes. January 22 is going to be great with me beating Holyfield and taking the WBF title."

I wouldn't get too cocky, Sherman. You lost to Tye Fields and Obed Sullivan. I don't think you'll make Vitali's to-do list even if you somehow beat Holyfield.

And don't sell the old guy short. He's been fighting all his life and if he's gotten soft, he isn't the same Holyfield most of us remember.

Twenty six years? That's peanuts.

Comment on this article

Radam G says:

I'm pulling for Holy to be up in boxing heaven in 2011. One of the alphabet sanctioning organization heavyweight champions may mess up and give him a shot. And unlike when he fought Valuev, he may just get the nod. Boxing reality is constantly stranger than fiction. Strange as heck it would be for Holy to become champ again, but I'm pulling for him. Holla!

SucharaRedkoe says:

Hi their, i created acclimatization

Not indigence to attend. I digs that he did and he is until this eye development

Isaiah says:

Wow, they couldn't just have given Evander the decision he earned against Valuev back in 2008, could they? They couldn't just let the old warrior walk away with a major title because that's as close as "The Real Deal" would get in the 21'st century to being the heavyweight champion of the world. Evander's not going to beat Wladimir, but man, they could have given him that WBA strap. Evander did better against Valuev than David "The Duck" Haye could do and yet, justice is not served once again. This only gives the old man more reason to fight on. When will the judges learn? When you rob a boxing senior citizen of a win he earned, (such as Hopkins/Pascal and Holyfield/Valuev) it only gives him more reason to "prove the world wrong" instead of letting the old man retire in peace.

brownsugar says:

Wow,.. I can't believe it's been that long,..26grueling years..... I draw a few parallels between Evander and Pacquiaou, both boxers came up from lighter weights and literally became "Organic fighting machines" like sharks in perpetual motion,.. they both "Ate" their way up from the lighter weight classes with sheer will and desciple-like dedication to rigorous strength training regimines that few athletes on earth could ever apply themselves to .....and proceeded to gobble the competition like chicken and broccoli dinners.....Each man in their prime had (has) the confidence of knowing that no matter who they were in the ring with,... or what type of disadvantages they might naturally incur... nobody is going to give as much of themselves before and during the fight as those two warriors could... That type of confidence and dedication is very very difficult to beat... too bad in Evanders case.... he can't let it go that his competitive years as an elite boxer began to fade away a decade ago. It's almost insulting to hear journeymen like Williams talking prefight trash,.. but it's a position that Holyfield continues to put himself in.. I hope a family member or friend (or the commission) can intervene and get him out of the active boxer business

FighterforJC says:

Until Pacquiao came along, Holyfield has been my favorite boxer since his first fight with Bowe. It was the first time I really rooted for Holyfield. I wanted Douglas and Foreman to beat him. I saw that fight live at the Thomas & Mack Center and the rematch at Caesar's (fan man fight). Holyfield is something else.

the Roast says:

Holyfield is the main man. He is one of the greatest of all time. Those fights from the 90's were some of the best times of my life. A lot of people crammed into a third floor apartment in Berwyn. Geez Louise.

Joe says:

Hate to see an great fighter reduced to this. The Real Deal gave us exciting fights as a Cruiser and at Heavyweight. The Bowe and Tyson fights were great. Really sad to see this proud man mumbling and bumbling.

Radam G says:

People can get on their rhyme and have a good tyme without some nutcases callin' 'em me -- the one and only Radam G. Danggit! In the old TSSU, there was no way that this would happen. Matter of fact, the nutcases claimed that Joe and Joey were I. Wow! And in this Universe, the cloner is now a goner. The stalker is no longer a walker and a lying, bullshyting talker. Everybody and dey mommas can now post and their sanity it won't cost. All is real, and the righteous luv we can feel. This Universe is just like Holy, "The Real Deal." He ain't what he use to be. But he can still pull a few victories. The heavyweight division is at its worse time ever. Holy may just beat all these suckas by being quite clever. Where in the heck is Bobby C. Maybe drunk from sippin' on tuba [Pinoy homemade wine] from a coconut tree? lmfao! Holla!

PatrickTT says:

I got a new computer recently and would like to eventually [url=http://blog.bitcomet.com/post/309345]download some HDor [url=http://blog.bitcomet.com/post/309366]DVD movieson here, but it's been so long since I had a decent laptop that I'm totally behind the times and have no end where to to to vex je sais quoi [url=http://blog.bitcomet.com/post/309382]full measure movies, so look for several more tech-related questions like this from me in the close-by future.

While I'm opinion surrounding it, even if, where do I belong together through despite [url=http://blog.bitcomet.com/post/309280]buy movies online ? Preferably destined for cheap? Thanks in go!

Robert Curtis says:

Holyfield is all man and fears no one but God. He's one of the great athletes of boxing whose achievements take your breath away. Even if Evander let his beard grow out like Santa Claus, both Klitschkos would be scared to see him in the opposite corner. I do worry about him getting hurt, but if his mind is still intact after all the powershots he's rolled with through the years, I doubt a few more can make any difference. The man loves ring combat. If he can get paid, may he keep getting fights. Now am I supposed to slap one of these sucky emoticons on the end of my post?

Robert Curtis says:

Does this mean we'll only have one Radam now? Awww. And this is progress?

Radam G says:

Finally Bobby C finds his way to the new, awesome Universe. Time to hit the coconut juice. Danggit! And then the pit. Holla!

the Roast says:

Ladies and gentlemen, ROBERT CURTIS has arrived!! Gets here and starts hating the emoticons! That is SO Bobby C!

brownsugar says:

welcome Mr C.