

Atlas Foundation Dinner Is TONIGHT!

Written by Michael Woods

Thursday, 17 November 2011 14:46



He sounded tired when I called him at 10 PM last night, and it felt like maybe I'd only get a couple minutes of Teddy Atlas' time to ask him about tonight's Atlas Foundation dinner, the 15th annual fundraising gala.

The Foundation raises money to help people who have fallen through the cracks, and the ESPN analyst/trainer does it in memory of his physician father, Theodore, who was known for doing house calls on Staten Island, and often accepting a meager payment on the barter system if the family was indigent.

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Atlas told me he flew in from Russia a couple hours before. He was there for four weeks, training his student Alex Povetkin, who defends his WBA heavyweight title against Cedric Boswell on Dec. 3 in Finland. "We're doing our annual turkey giveaway, giving turkeys to about 800 needy families, on Saturday morning," he told me. "Then that afternoon I'll hop on a flight back to Russia. Yes, I've been busy, but there's lots of demands. We always get cases where people have nowhere else to go. This year, even more so with the tough economy."

We fightwriters, and I definitely include myself in this indictment, spend excess time focusing on soap operatics, on boxers misbehaving, and promoters sniping at each other and the like. We miss positive stories on the fight game. Like the Atlas Foundation, which will tonight at the Hilton Garden Inn on Staten Island raise money which enables them to hand a check to a 10 year-old girl and her family to help pay for the medicines she needs to stay alive following her liver transplant. The surgery cost \$300,000 and the insurance company covered it. But they don't cover the 14 or so medications she might need for the rest of her life, which cost a couple thousand dollars a month.

Fight fans are welcome to attend the gala, as walk-up tickets are still available. Click here for info. <http://dratlasfoundation.com/teddydinner.html>

They will hear the passionate Atlas make a call to stamp out the disease of violence, especially gun-related violence. He was truly touched when meeting a three year old girl who need a prosthetic eye to replace the one put out by an errant bullet. "A little girl of two shouldn't get her eye ripped out by a frigging bullet," he said to me, steeped in the same passion we hear in the corner when he's telling his student to do the right thing, act like a pro.

They will hear about how the Atlas Cops and Kids clubs give at-risk kids a place to go, and a reason for steering clear of street temptations. Yes, they will hear about how boxing and many of the people involved aren't all thugs, creeps and cons.

I want to acknowledge Atlas, and how he is going out of his way to raise the money which helps out in this, the richest nation in the world, which houses so many citizens who apparently aren't horrified that for many, proper health and medical coverage is seen as a luxury. He will get back to getting Povetkin ready for Boswell soon enough, but really, he works on the dinner year-round, trying to rope in the celebs, such as Willem Dafoe, Brian Cashman and Vinny Guadagnino from "Jersey Shore," who draw up to 1,000 people to his dinner.

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As for Povetkin, Atlas says he won't let him look past the 42-year-old Boswell, a 35-1 fighter from Georgia who hasn't been tested all that much.

"I know what he is, he has size, reach, a good skills package, pretty fast hands, technically he's pretty good. His attitude and style is to box, control center ring, get off, get out, get countering opportunities. He knows how to do things. We have to take the fight to him, test him in areas we should test him in. He hasn't been in too tough situations, hasn't been in deep waters. We should set the pace to benefit us. We can't take him lightly. He knows this is his one shot. That makes him potentially dangerous."

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dino da vinci says:

Couple things about Teddy. I have a very good friend in the fight game who is knowledgeable and NOT prone to exaggeration. He told me many, many years ago, "you have no idea how gutter tough Atlas is". And this guy isn't easily impressed or quick with a compliment.

If you haven't read his book that was out several years ago, you should. It's one of those books where you say to yourself, I'll read a couple more pages. Then a couple more pages. And then you realize you've read it in one sitting. Well worth the money.

Absolutely sure the event will be as big a success as it is every year.