

In Paul Williams' Corner

Written by Kelsey McCarson
Wednesday, 29 May 2013 21:00



I was fond of Paul Williams as a fighter. The lanky, southpaw was an ever-advancing force when the bell rang, sort of a modern mishmash of Tommy Hearn and Henry Armstrong. At his peak in the mid-2000s, Williams was the welterweight no one wanted to fight. He presented numerous problems for just about any competitor at 147, so most of them simply didn't want to fight him.

Who could blame them? Williams had otherworldly potential. The first time I saw him fight, in fact, I thought to myself, now *there's* a future all-time great.

But Williams never improved really. The flaws he had as a fighter when he entered his prime stayed his flaws right up until his very last fight against Nobuhiro Ishida in 2012. So much so, in

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fact, that after he was knocked out cold by middleweight great Sergio Martinez, and soundly out-boxed by crafty Cuban Erislandy Lara (despite winning by MD on the official scorecards), we “experts” decided the only appropriate course of action for him to take was to ditch longtime trainer, manager, father-figure and friend, George Peterson, for someone better.

Williams remained stubbornly loyal, though, and thank God for it. Because just as he began working his way back into tip-top form, just as he plotted and planned his ascension back towards the upper-echelon of the sport, life picked poor Paul Williams up off his speeding Memorial Day weekend joyride and smacked him down to the cold, hard concrete.

Williams' spinal cord wasn't severed in the crash, but it was damaged enough to put him in a wheelchair since, and possibly for the rest of his life.

According to Noah Feit, sports editor for the *Aiken Standard*, George Peterson, the man we wanted Williams to kick to the curb, has remained Williams' loyal friend and confidant since the accident. The two visit multiple times a week to share stories of their daily exploits. Peterson trains fighters at his gym. Williams catches fish at the lake.

From [Feit](#) :

“He thinks he doesn't have a handicap at all, and I expect big things from him,” Peterson said of Williams, who has spoken about an eventual return to the ring in spite of his dramatic injury. While Peterson isn't willing to go that far, he won't put anything beyond his protégés' reach. “People have counted Paul out in the past and he would always say to me, ‘George, don't worry. We got this.’ He was an underdog and won three championships. He's saying the same thing now. I've got no choice but to believe him. He's in the best of spirits.”

Peterson (*pictured above, left, with Williams after Paul's MD12 win over Sergio Martinez in 2009*) told Feit the doctors believe it's possible for him to regain enough movement in his lower body to walk again someday in the near future, but that it wasn't a certainty. We know where Williams stands on the matter. He told Showtime's Jim Gray last September that he'll do more than just walk again someday.

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“I think I can come back [to boxing],” Williams told Gray. “Give it two or three years, and I’ll come back.”

Whatever happens, Williams made the right choice in keeping his trainer, and it has nothing to do with how many big paydays, title belts or vain accolades he can help Williams achieve.

You see, whatever becomes of Paul Williams, whether he walks again like he plans to, or whether he has to continue to live life as bravely from his wheelchair as he did from his feet, he’ll have George Peterson, trainer, manager, father-figure and friend, right there in his corner.

And there’s no one better for the job.

[Comment on this article](#)

Radam G says:

The sweetest of sweet science copy this is. I salute you. I do believe that Paul Williams is like the legendary phoenix, though I was very critical of his boxing game.

He may not ever be able to box again, but he will be able to rise from the ashes of walkingless and strut like a peacock. Walking again, he has it on lock. Holla!

amayseng says:

Paul Williams is a man to the definition.

He keeps on striving and fighting and I pray he walks again.

He was a hell of a fighter too.

Pure volume with good skills and always exciting.

God bless him.

the Roast says:

Good luck Paul. Once a fighter, always a fighter.

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Carmine Cas says:

Good luck Paul Williams, I really hope you come back

dino da vinci says:

You've been in my prayers since the accident. Godspeed Paul.

Buzz Murdock says:

I was just thinking of mr. Williams the other day, and how "a simple twist of fate", can change everything almost immediately. Time has a funny way of changing me/i used to be someone different in my memory..i don't know if anything happens for a reason, i just hope mr. Williams is doing okay.

ali says:

Great piece!! Loyalty is hard to find.

dino da vinci says:

[QUOTE=ali;31424]Great piece!! Loyalty is hard to find.[/QUOTE]

Sadly, as we make our way through the 21st Century it's becoming just about impossible to find. To bad too, becoming it's one of Man's greatest traits.

Radam G says:

Ditto Deepwater! Holla!

DaveB says:

People like Paul Williams amaze me. My mother and my brother, who is still here thank God, are two such people. All of you are such an inspiration. I would be so happy to see this man walk once more. He seems to be a great person through and through.