

Melson Fought With ONE Good Arm

Written by The Sweet Science
Wednesday, 05 March 2014 12:56



New York, NY (March 4, 2014) – For the first two and a half rounds of his February 12 bout against veteran Donald “Bulldog” Ward, rising junior middleweight Captain Boyd “Rainmaker” Melson appeared en-route to another impressive victory. In the second, Melson nearly stopped Ward and was seeking to score a knockout in the Roseland Ballroom’s final fight.

This was until an unexpected injury completely debilitated the 2003 West Point Graduate.

In the third round with the fight in his control, Melson’s entire right arm was temporarily paralyzed after throwing a hook. Shockingly, Melson was diagnosed after the fight with a stretched brachial plexus, which controls all of the movement and feeling from his collar bone down to his fingertips. From that moment forward, he was unable to throw jabs or his trademark check-hooks, as his right arm literally dangled at his side. Realizing his foe was at a major disadvantage, Ward looked to turn the tides.

For the next five and a half stanzas of the scheduled eight rounder, Melson struggled mightily as a one-armed fighter. Having to rely on his less coordinated arm, Melson used his intelligence and left arm to fight on.

“Doctor Barry Jordan of the New York State Athletic Commission told me he was astonished that I finished the fight and he’d never seen an injury like mine in 30 years of working with fighters,” stated Melson. “Dr. Jordan told me “often in the NFL, you will see players taken off the field with their arm dangling lifeless, sidelining them for weeks.”

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Melson, an Army Reserve Officer, refused to quit even with the circumstances.

"My arm down to my fingertips felt like it weighed 1000 pounds and I literally could not move it. The pain was surreal and crippling in itself. I was nervous I was going to get stopped since I wasn't able to fully defend myself. I felt disconnect from my right shoulder, making my arm go limp in segments down to my fingertips. Then it became heavy to the point where I could not move it. I tried moving my finger tips and they were frozen. When I tied my opponent up, my first thought was that I am having a stroke. While tied up, I check on my right leg and it felt strong. The right side of my face felt strong too, so I figured it wasn't a stroke. Then I thought perhaps I was dizzy and uncoordinated from taking a blow and canceled that out as I felt myself able to think clearly. I pushed off with my right arm lifeless by my side, kept my left glove up against my left cheek and started moving around to buy time since I needed to think."

"My thoughts went as follows in a matter of a few seconds while I was bouncing around: I am so scared I have no idea what has happened to me, I need to call the referee over, take a knee and tell him what happened. I can't believe this has happened and I don't know why I can't move my fingertips. I can't believe this is happening. He is going to jump on me and pummel me because I cannot defend myself. I will explain to the media what happened in post interviews, but nobody will care."

Melson then received internal motivation.

"Christan came smashing into my mind and I could see her forcing herself to walk with her face in pain, then West Point popped into my head and I thought I am a damn West Point Graduate and Army Captain, I have one hand, he still has to beat me!"

Melson stopped bouncing around and settled in front of Ward with his arm dangling and proceeded to fight. When Melson sat down following that round, he told his corner that his arm was dead and he couldn't move his fingertips, but he'd be ok. His cornermen told him that maybe he'd be able to use it the next round, but that next round never came.

"I remember during the sixth, I was able to raise my right glove to my face. I tried to catch a jab and my right arm at the elbow folded as if it were made of jello and dropped to my side. I figured that it didn't work yet and I've got to figure out something else."

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After his victory, Melson was shocked that notable ringsiders weren't aware of his injury.

"Professional boxers and fans who watched the fight said they did not notice anything wrong with my right arm and that I was just being lazy or using an unusual strategy. Most ringside reports all said I faded after the second round, my opponent came back strong, in the SIXTH round it appeared I hurt my right shoulder and the last fight at the Roseland was a let down."

"The few fans that quickly noticed it were personal friends who were medical clinicians. Respected boxing writer Thomas Hauser spoke to me a week later and when I shared the details of the injury with him, he said he knew right away what happened and was amazed nobody else recognized that I was hurt. After I left the ring, I told one reporter what happened. He admitted he missed the injury, but the fact that I fought through it is a testament to my character. He went on to say I never panicked or gave signs that would make others realize something bad had happened."

Regardless of what others said, Melson's satisfied with his performance under the circumstances.

"I am extremely proud of how I responded to what life threw at me. It is sad and ironic to me that the last fight at Roseland was reported as me performing poorly instead of a boxer who fights to cure paralysis having one of his limbs become paralyzed in the fight and still finds a way to win."

Sadly, Melson is suffering from terrible neuropathic (nerve) pain three weeks after his gutsy victory.

"I am in pain every day all day since this happened. It's deep in my arm and it tingles regularly. Different parts of my arm down to my fingertips feel funny to the touch as if they are waking up from being asleep with pins and needles. I saw multiple doctors and they all said to be patient as it could be worse and fortunately for me, it will fully heal in time."

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Melson will be out of the gym until further notice.

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