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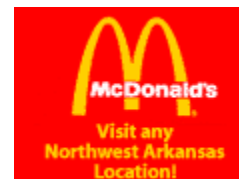
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## Arkansas Democrat Gazette

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS EDITION



### Taylor's team considering possibilities for next fight

BY CHRIS GIVENS  
 Posted on Saturday, January 17, 2009  
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Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/CHRIS DEAN Jermain Taylor (left) reacts after beating former Arkansas Razorbacks receiver Anthony Lucas (far right) for the "D1" championship in a mock competition Friday at the newly opened D1 Sports Training and Therapy facility in Little Rock.

Jermain Taylor got a head start on training for his next fight Friday night.

Taylor, the former middleweight world champion from Little Rock, squared off against former Arkansas Razorbacks allconference wide receiver Anthony Lucas in a mock competition at D1 Sports Training and Therapy, the newly-opened training facility in Little Rock. Taylor is a co-owner of the facility.

Taylor and Lucas, the facility coordinator, went head-to-head in a series of athletic events - all done in a light-hearted manner designed to entertain the large crowd - to determine Little Rock's "greatest" athlete.

Taylor won 4-3, taking such events as jump roping, speed bag, sit-ups and, in a shock to Lucas, the football toss.

Meanwhile, discussions about a real fight for Taylor (28-2-1, 17 KOs) continue.

Taylor last fought Nov. 5, when he nearly shut out Jeff Lacy in a dominating unanimous-decision victory.

The plan since that fight was for Taylor to fight three times in 2009, which would mean he would need to get in the ring for his first fight sometime in March.

HBO, the network that has broadcast Taylor's fights since his career began, has no dates available until May.

Taylor is no longer under contract with HBO, and Lou DiBella, Taylor's promoter, has held discussions with Showtime to potentially broadcast Taylor's next fight. Showtime has a March 28 date available, should Taylor find an opponent. DiBella has said that if they go with that network and date, the fight would likely be in St. Louis, sharing a card with St. Louis native Cory Spinks, whom Taylor defeated in 2007.

Ozell Nelson, Taylor's trainer, said that while they are entertaining



the possibility of fighting on Showtime, they also do not want to eliminate the possibility of a major fight on HBO, and would be willing to wait for an available date on HBO if the right fight comes along. Nelson said they had a particular fighter in mind who would be big enough to convince Taylor to delay fighting until May, but declined to name him. Nelson did say none of the fighters DiBella is speaking with, including Englishman Carl Froch, Glen Johnson, Andre Ward, Lucian Bute and Allan Greene, fit the description.

"I am ready to fight," Taylor said. "I'm ready to get into camp. I definitely want to do three fights [in 2009]. But HBO is where we want to be. We love HBO. But if Showtime comes up with something, we'll talk to Showtime."

Taylor, by virtue of his victory over Lacy, has been elevated in the rankings and is the mandatory opponent for Froch, the WBC super middleweight champion, giving Taylor another shot at a title.

"That's where it's at, man, having the belts," Taylor said. "I want to be champion."

Froch has said he wants the fight, but HBO declined to offer a purse for a Taylor-Froch fight.

"No one knows Carl Froch in the U.S., and HBO would not accept him as an opponent," Di-Bella said. "Not because he isn't a decent fighter, because no one knows who he is. The bottom line is this - we're willing to fight Carl Froch, we've made offers to his promoter, and if his promoter doesn't accept the deal that we're comfortable with, then we'll fight someone else."

DiBella said that if Froch does not work out, the next most likely opponent would be Johnson, a fighter DiBella co-promotes.

Calls to England to Froch's promoter, Mick Hennessy, were not answered.

In a video posted on Froch's official Web site, [www.cobraboxing.com](http://www.cobraboxing.com), Hennessy said he is in negotiations with DiBella and that Froch wants the fight to happen and will travel to New York or Las Vegas for a chance to face Taylor.

There was a rumor that Froch was injured and could not fight until June, but Froch said in a statement on his site that there is no truth to that and he believes Taylor does not want to fight him.

"I believe Taylor and DiBella have been swerving me for some time now," Froch said in the statement. "They obviously don't fancy the job. Now this mysterious rumor is being spread in the U.S. that I'm injured, so he's looking at other options. The only person that's going to be out is Jermain Taylor after I've smoked his boots. I'm ready, willing and able to defend my title against him anytime, anyplace. All he needs to do is crawl out from the Little Rock he's been hiding behind and we can get the fight on."

Ken Hershman, Showtime's senior vice president and general manager of sports and event programming, said that the network is interested in broadcasting a Taylor fight with either Froch or Johnson.

"There's no lack of people for Jermain Taylor to fight," DiBella said. "No one is ducking anyone. It's a business. I'm not letting Jermain Taylor make a dumb economic deal."

Taylor's manager, Al Haymon, who is also working on finding an opponent for Taylor, does not speak with the media and was not available for comment.

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