

## Preview: Toney - Rahman Meet Tonight On HBO

Written by {ga=fightdr}

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Finally. A heavyweight fight that actually means something.

Fight fans have been waiting for what seems like decades for the most attractive division to be sorted out. Lennox Lewis retires and then all hell broke loose, as the belts were split out amongst a cast of unappealing pretenders. Things are just now starting to get interesting once again.

Are there any difference makers amongst the lot of top contenders? Are any of these guys really that good? Why won't the best heavyweights fight each other?

The answer up until now to all of these questions was no. On Saturday night, two of the top five or six will actually fight. Even better is that they will do it against each other. And the future of the division looks more promising that it has since Lennox retired.

The fun all starts tonight as James "Lights Out" Toney (69-4-2) faces "The Rock" Hasim Rahman (41-5-1) at the Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City.

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Toney claims to be the best heavy fighting and calls himself the champion of the division. Toney won part of the crown when he defeated Boring John Ruiz but had to forfeit it back when he tested positive for banned substances. Toney is riding a 15 fight winning streak, and is getting better with age after initially making a name for himself as a welterweight, then ressurecting his career as a heavyweight. At 37 years and 8 months, he would become the oldest first time heavyweight champion ever with a win tonight. Toney has never been knocked out in 76 pro fights.

Rahman is the former undisputed champion and current WBC champ who has a KO victory over Lennox Lewis on his resume. The Rock has stayed busy but not against anyone in the class of Toney. Rahman looks to be in amazing shape, thanks mostly to two postponements, then ultimately a cancellation of a scheduled fight with Vitali Klitschko, who has retired due to injuries sustained while training. Like Toney, Rahman has remained a very productive fighter later into his career, and has regained status as a top heavyweight since a four fight winless streak he went through after his win over Lennox. He is four years younger than Toney, and four inches taller. And he enjoys a nine inch reach advantage.

Toney wants to trade punches and even though it doesn't look like he should (he is a large man these days), he has pretty good stamina. Nobody has been able to hurt the big fella recently. He is going to look to overpower Rahman and make the him fight in a telephone booth. Rahman on the other hand thinks he has more power and will look to be at a distance and use his speed advantage. This actually has the making of a pretty intriguing matchup. Two very experienced guys that have held belts, and been through wars ... going head to head.

Come Saturday night I'll be looking at two things that should determine the winner. Can Rahman get to Toney from the outside and hurt the plump Toney with his jab? And which guy will take the first risk and/or make the first mistake? I see Hasim getting frustrated and not being able to hurt Toney, who will stick his jab in his beak from all over the ring. I see Toney winning a very lopsided decision and hopefully it doesn't turn into a boring grabfest.

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This is the first of a few good Heavyweight matchups in 2006. Finally.