

Brock seeks huge payday on pay TV

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Klitschko announced his retirement due to torn knee ligaments earlier this month. The WBC named Hasim Rahman the interim champion and selected James Toney and Oleg Maskaev as top challengers.

It's possible that Brock, a West Charlotte High and UNC Charlotte graduate, may challenge champions Chris Byrd for the IBF, Lamon Brewster for the WBO and John Ruiz

for the WBA. If he does, he plans to bring the bouts back to Charlotte.

"I don't want to go backwards, I want to go forward," he said. "I want to go for world championship titles. It felt absolutely wonderful to have hometown support. It makes me want to come back and do it again with the world championship and bring more bouts back here."

Wharton still adjusting to LT

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Wharton was the only rookie on the offensive line in 2004 where he played left guard. That line yielded only 33 sacks, the third-lowest total in Carolina history. Wharton also assisted running back Nick Goings in matching a team record with four, consecutive 100-yard rushing games in 2004 and helped quarterback Jake Delhomme eclipse the 3,000-yard passing

plateau in 2004 for the second consecutive season with 3,025 yards.

Teammate Gross said, Wharton doesn't make the big mistakes at his position that causes that quarterback problems. After the Jets' game, Gross was quick to praise his teammate's play.

"He's a good player and the thing about left tackle is that there's going to be a few bad plays and he's really mini-

mized those," Gross said.

That was until they played the Bears. Delhomme was sacked eight times versus Chicago and defensive line men blew past Wharton as if he wasn't there.

The third year man admits that he had to adjust to playing this position on the professional level.

"It's different, I had to learn the technique going through training camp," he said.

Owens episode could have long-lasting impact on others

By Gregory Moore
BLACKATHLETE.NET

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — Just how far has Terrell Owens damaged his career and that of many other talented African-American athletes?

Well, if you want to put it on a monetary term, the exploits of the embattled wide receiver may have cost him a few millions, and it may have definitely cost other "troubled" athletes eight figures in endorsement deals.

If this sounds like an off-base diatribe, let me assure you that in black America, perception is very much a real entity when being compared to the rest of the world.

While Owens may have been just one individual, the mere fact that in the sports realm, African-Americans make up a good majority of the nation's football and basketball teams that are seen across the country. On the professional level, black athletes have the opportunity to be financially secure once they leave the game and a good example is that of Donovan McNabb.

McNabb can be compared to Michael Jordan as he has transcended his sports of "faceless individuals wearing a helmet, and has transformed himself and his family into the media darlings of Madison Avenue.

But what does Owens' antics have to do with McNabb and others? Simply put, as much as McNabb may be a positive selling agent for companies, these media buyers are very wary of using athletes who have "questionable" work practices, behavioral issues or societal dilemmas. Owens falls into the latter category because media buyers have also documented everything he has done to disrupt the team.

To get a better understanding let's use Owens in an example. If Owens was the shy kid from Alabama and that persona was prevalent, where he was always congenial, always manageable and respectful, he would have some very good endorsements, although not very

lucrative. The "nice" Terrell may have his own food commercial, several print ads in magazines of him endorsing fitness products and even a car dealership deal. His estimated worth of such deals for the good T.O.? An estimated \$1 million to \$3 million could be possible.

Let's say that Owens is just a shade under his "destructive" self but has some of the good T.O. qualities when it comes to dealing with people. Because this persona may have an edge to him, this Owens may have lost a food deal here and there, but he could still get some major fitness deals, some guest appearances in a few small screen projects like sitcoms, dramatic series and even music videos. He could even garner some major endorsements on cars like a Dodge Viper and the like, and be seen in magazines like VIBE endorsing the urban culture. His estimated worth could possibly have been \$3 million or \$4 million if that was his actual self.

However, the current T.O. loses out on any of the aforementioned scenarios because he is now considered an advertising risk. Character flaws such as combativeness with teammates or management play a humongous role in whether companies will use athletes to endorse their products. Owens' nature during the past few months has cost him millions in off-the-field salary.

So how does this equate to other African-American athletes who may have very similar pathological profiles? It affects them in the realm of acceptance and the ability to be a team player in the corporate world.

If an athlete, especially a minority, is deemed to be a prima donna, the chances of him getting an endorsement deal are slim. African-American athletes who are playing professional sports most definitely need to adhere to being social butterflies. It is not too hard to look at such players as Milton Bradley, Owens, Latrell Sprewell and others who have been defiant individuals on the court and

see whether or not they have lucrative endorsement deals.

By no means is this column suggesting that black athletes need to kiss butt in order to make outside money. What is being suggested is that maybe it is time to truly understand the worth of your career outside the chalk lines of the playing field. Agents are supposed to do that assessment for you, but you should never just rely on someone that you are paying to represent you.

Owens' actions has grouped quite a few talented but egotistical African-American athletes as being troublemakers and that may not be a fair assessment by endorsement dealmakers. Fortune 500 companies pay big dollars to athletes to sell their products in national advertisements. These companies want team players and not renegades that could give the company a negative image to their buying public. Players of Owens' ilk don't understand that concept, but it is a lesson to be learned.



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