

Taylor VS Pavlik

Jermain Taylor blames one big factor for his loss to Kelly Pavlik last September: fatigue. "I feel like I wasted a lot of energy -- energy that I really didn't have," Taylor said in a conference call Thursday. "I went into survival mode. I was tired." Taylor, 29, of Little Rock, Ark., lost his middleweight title when he was stopped in the seventh round by Pavlik. The rematch is Feb. 16 in Las Vegas. In the first fight, Taylor knocked Pavlik down in the second round but couldn't end the fight. "If I get him in that position again, I'm going to finish him," Taylor said. Ozell Nelson, Taylor's amateur coach and mentor, has replaced veteran Emanuel Steward as his trainer. Taylor didn't discuss many specific tactical adjustments he'll make, but he said immediately after his loss that he'd thrown too many unnecessary punches. All three judges had Taylor ahead after six rounds, but Pavlik backed Taylor into a corner and hit him with a hard right and several more shots to the head. The first matchup was an entertaining one. Even Taylor's camp would concur with that. "While the outcome wasn't what we wanted, it was a great night for boxing," said Lou DiBella, Taylor's trainer. Pavlik (32-0) held his own conference call this week. He said he's unsure what to expect from Taylor (27-1-1) this time. "I don't know how he's going to react from that knockout," said Pavlik, 25, of Youngstown, Ohio. "We prepare for everything." The rematch won't be for any title because the fight will take place at 166 pounds. Taylor's ability to fight at the 160-pound middleweight limit was a concern even before the September bout. "He has never run away from a challenge," DiBella said. "If Jermain wasn't such a great champion, the first fight probably wouldn't have happened." But Taylor did fight Pavlik. In fact, he hoped a win over the aggressive challenger would silence critics who felt Taylor hadn't been all that impressive since ending Bernard Hopkins' middleweight reign in 2005. Instead, Taylor lost. Now he'll fight for pride instead of a title, although a win would certainly give Taylor's profile a much-needed boost. He wasted little time pursuing the rematch. "Obviously he took this fight that quick, so he really wants to redeem himself," Pavlik said.

About the Author

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