

## **DANIEL JACOBS OPENS UP ON JOURNEY TO "ULTIMATE OPPONENT" GENNADY GOLOVKIN: "I'M GONNA SURPRISE A LOT OF PEOPLE"**

By [Caryn A. Tate](#) | January 17, 2017

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One of the reasons so many people love the sport of boxing is because it's a metaphor for life. It's inspiring when a fighter gets hurt or knocked down yet rallies back to overcome the challenge. Similarly, Daniel "Miracle Man" Jacobs' (32-1, 29 KOs) story is one of the ultimate triumph of human spirit and strength, and it speaks to us on a deep level.

Prior to beginning training camp for perhaps the toughest test of his career, facing Gennady "GGG" Golovkin (36-0, 33 KOs) on March 18 at Madison Square Garden in a much-anticipated title unification, Jacobs graciously granted this exclusive interview.

Jacobs has made headlines on a personal level with his triumph over osteosarcoma, an aggressive form of bone cancer that temporarily rendered him paralyzed in 2011, after his 23rd professional fight. Jacobs endured grueling treatments and therapies, and even after the cancer had been beaten, it was then time for a whole new battle: he had to learn how to walk again, and his doctors advised him that he would never box again.

But Jacobs' championship mentality and heart endured—he refused to be limited by a small vision. Instead of focusing only on walking again—a victory in and of itself—he dreamed bigger. Despite everything he'd been through, despite the medical experts telling him he couldn't do it, he held onto his dream: not only would he box again, but he would do it at the highest level by winning a world title. In 2014, he achieved that dream by winning the WBA middleweight championship.

Now, Danny Jacobs is determined to use his unique position as a professional athlete and a champion in life to help others who are going through similar struggles that he endured. In 2013, he founded [Get in the Ring Foundation](#) to help children and families fighting cancer.

"I knew firsthand just how devastating cancer could be, whether it's mentally, physically, financially," Jacobs said. "So I told myself if I was ever in a position to help people who are going through these things, and especially coming off of—I lost everything, you know, when I was going through my whole situation, I really kind of hit rock bottom. So I always

said that if I can help in any way, I would. We focus on children and families with cancer, whether it's financial assistance, mental and physical assistance, whatever way we can, we help out in as many ways as we can.

"I'm really big into health and nutrition so we go to schools, and different hospitals, and we have different programs that teach kids about health and nutrition and the proper and fun way to eat healthy foods. Part of cancer is eating the wrong foods that trigger those cancer cells. So teaching kids about health and nutrition also is a real important thing for me, being an athlete as well. So those are two things that we focus on. It's been very successful as of late, you know, the more attention I've been receiving, and the more people have been supporting me, I've been able to do more and more events. It's a really cool organization and it's really dear to my heart because of the impact that I realized that I never knew I had. So going through what I did, and telling my story to so many different people, and sharing it, and seeing their faces and knowing the impact that I had that's how I know that my life is more than just boxing and what I do. I know that the Creator has allowed me to have this phenomenal story to be able to impact people. It's not just, you get in the ring and you knock people out, you're the best thing since sliced bread. It's more what your life means to people and just the inspiration and the motivation and all that it took to get back, I just know that it speaks volumes. I travel as much as I can, and I've been very, very successful with spreading the word and sharing my story."

In addition to being a world boxing champion and founding the Get in the Ring Foundation, Jacobs has also become the face of **Brooklyn Boxing**, the boxing platform for Barclays Center in Brooklyn, which is where Jacobs hails from and still lives today. Jacobs has fought several times at Barclays Center, and proudly represents the borough with the Brooklyn Boxing brand.

Since the Premier Boxing Champions platform launch in 2015, Jacobs has also performed as a television commentator for several fights. When asked about commentating and whether he plans to continue with it, he said, "Absolutely. That's something that I really, really enjoy--I actually plan to do more once my career actually slows down a little bit. I'm very good at it. I understand that it's very rare to have a boxer who can commentate like that, and I've been with several different networks, and I've had a lot of success, and I've had a lot of good feedback as well, so that's something I can look forward to after my career.

"I always say to people that it's so easy to just sit around and talk with your friends or your homeboys, and you know, you talk in your own lingo when you're talking about boxing or when you're watching a fight, but to be able to articulate it in a way where the mass public can understand it--because we don't have the same lingo as everyone else, so you have to put it in a way where everybody can understand it and know where you're coming from and from your perspective. I'm very proud of that, because the stereotype with fighters is that we're not educated, we can't articulate ourselves in the right way, or there's so many different things in boxing. So I just want to kind of kill those stereotypes."

Like many boxers, Danny is also a true fan of the sport and enjoys watching fights nearly as much as he enjoys participating in them. When asked who his biggest influences in the sport are, he said, "I would say, as of old, Roy Jones, Jr. and Sugar Ray Leonard. And as of new, Andre Ward.

"I went to the Kovalev-Ward fight [in November 2016] because I knew the GGG fight was looming, we were in negotiations so I knew there was a strong possibility it was gonna happen. And I wanted to get there and just really get a lot of inspiration. I was rooting for Andre Ward and I knew he would pull it off, but just in the fashion that he did it, because it was such a close fight, I put myself in those shoes, you know? I got so much inspiration and it just felt great to see history. It was a really good fight and I just mostly wanted to take home that energy."

Jacobs has been on a knockout streak for the past six years, having stopped all of his past 12 opponents during that time. His fight in December 2015 with Peter "Kid Chocolate" Quillin was seen by most experts as a true 50-50 fight, matching two of the best middleweights in the world; yet Jacobs ended up stopping Quillin in round 1 in a shockingly one-sided and short bout. Particularly lately, in the lead-up to the fight with Golovkin, most pundits have focused on Jacobs' knockout power. Not much has been said about the boxing ability required in order to land his power and obtain those knockouts.

When asked about that, Danny said, "Yeah, they've been kind of sidetracked--people think I'm just a knockout artist. I got my foundation from the amateur system where I learned how to hit and not get hit, and actually kind of master the craft, you know? So I'm really proud of that. In my professional fights, my trainer stresses to me you don't really get paid for overtime, so if you can get a guy out of there, get a guy out of there, so we haven't really been forced to show all that I have inside my arsenal. And that's why I think that this fight is so important, because there's a lot of sides that people haven't got a chance to see of me, and there's so much more on the table as far as skill.

"I think I'm gonna surprise a lot of people because people are thinking it's just gonna be a knockout, or it's gonna be a fast fight. But, you know, there's more to me and more inside of me, and true grit, that I'll be able to show. It's an exciting time for me. I'm really fortunate to have this opportunity."

Recently, when speaking with the press, Jacobs commented that since his single loss in 2010, he began to focus more on sitting down on his punches and making sure he didn't allow himself to be backed up or bullied. I asked how he feels that change in technique impacted his confidence in the ring. "Well, I mean, that's the thing--boxing is all about the mental state. And I believe early on, being the amateur fighter who always hit and [didn't get] hit not that you're fearful of being hit, but it kind of makes you tentative, so you always want to move first and then punch. And we got so comfortable doing that, that it kind of became who we were. So in the time that I had that setback, I had a chance to kind of be on the outside looking in, and I knew that that was something I had to change. So we worked on a lot of those different things, and we got comfortable working on the inside, and standing our ground and not letting a guy mentally have a gain over you. Because if a guy can push you back and he sees he's doing it at ease, or he's having success at it, then that's gonna change his mental state as well. He's gonna get more confident, and he's gonna punch harder, he's not gonna get more tired, and all the pressure's on you. So it's more of a chess game as well, and I realized that over the years. So that's just one of the things that I tried to change, to just implement my game."

Speaking of instinct and putting more pop into his punches, I asked Danny which fight he would point someone to if they had never seen one of his bouts. "Probably the Peter Quillin fight," he said, "and the Giovanni Lorenzo fight. Because those are probably some of the most exciting type of stoppages that I've had. Especially the Giovanni Lorenzo one, because they actually caught that on slow motion. So you actually get to see a guy who gets knocked out, and his face, what happens to it mean it's kinda brutal, but if you're a true boxing fan it's cool."

When asked whether he and his team planned for the Quillin stoppage or if it just transpired that way, Jacobs said, "Well, see, fighters have a thing called a fighter's instinct. And you know whether or not a fighter is hurt enough to where he can continue, or he's hurt enough to where he's on the verge of really going down or being stopped. I knew that Peter Quillin was probably at that [point], so I knew that I didn't want that opportunity to get wasted. I wanted to take full advantage of it. I'm pretty good at really knowing how to finish the job when it comes to hurting guys, so we just bombarded him, we smothered him with punches, we didn't let him get his legs back under him and recuperate, and we got him out of there."

Danny is 6'0" tall with a 73" reach, while his upcoming opponent Golovkin is 5'10 1/2" with a 70" reach: a clear statistical advantage for the Brooklyn fighter. "I think every advantage that a fighter has over another is a key that could be used. Boxing is all about physics, it's all about using whatever you have to your best ability. Because a lot of guys who had the talent to beat GGG couldn't do it because of the physics. You know, physically they wasn't able to overcome the power, physically they wasn't able to really stand their ground and back him up, you know, and that's the key to beating a guy like that. So I definitely think I have the physical advantages."

When I asked about what he does to prepare himself mentally, spiritually, and otherwise before a fight, Jacobs said, "I just try my best to become one with myself and my thoughts. And obviously the nerves are there, the anxiety is there. That's just inevitable because we're human beings. But I just think that as much as you try to stay in tune with yourself, and kind of become one with that emotion and making it work for you, as opposed to letting it effect you in a harmful way, then that's the key."

"But it really takes years of kind of mastering that and getting used to those things. Meditation is something that I do throughout camp to try to prepare for that, because a lot of guys get nervous and it actually shows in those first couple rounds, so I try my best to stay away from that."

"On my way to the ring I try my best to just be in my comfort zone as much as possible. I'll come out to some music that I know, get me pumped up, try to get me in that zone, or seeing that crowd, hearing the cheers, and stuff like that. All that stuff just adds to me getting in the zone. I think that walk to the ring, or the seconds right before the bell, those are the crucial moments, because, you know, the first round, in my opinion, too-can kind of dictate everything. It's all about who can be more dominant early on and solidify themselves, and establish their true essence of the fight, their fight plan."

Speaking of preparation, I asked Danny about how he and his team prepare for his opponents-does he tailor his training specific to an opponent, or keep each camp pretty similar to the last? "I think you have to tailor your training. That's what I've been doing. I think you have to treat every fight different, although you don't stray from the essentials, you do have to nitpick certain things because every fighter has different attributes and every fighter brings something different to the table. So, you know, as far as the same type of regimens, we do, but we switch up a couple of different things depending on our opponent. '

"This one will definitely be different, because this, to me, is the ultimate opponent. So we would definitely probably have to go in there and switch up a couple of things, and most importantly just stay true to the game plan. Because I feel like the game plan that we're gonna implement is gonna be a really good one, and I think that I'm such a strong fighter, I think it won't be as hard as a lot of guys have had it."

[**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *FightHype.com would like to welcome the talents of Caryn Tate to the team.*]

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