

GLENN McCRORY UNSUNG HERO OF THE YEAR

James DeGale
(Great Britain)



Super-middleweight champion is now getting recognition he fully deserves

The UK's unsung hero in boxing in 2015 was James DeGale.

Anthony Crolla was an obvious choice for his comeback to win a world title from a fractured skull and ankle after he was attacked while tackling a pair of burglars at a neighbour's home, but I think his heroism has garnered great praise and he really did receive his recognition.

DeGale won two world title fights on the road abroad in 2015. Winning the world title in California against the tricky Andre Dirrell was a huge achievement and it enabled DeGale to re-establish himself after a loss to George Groves four years ago, which set him back. DeGale returned from Beijing in 2008 as a gold medallist, but spoilt it against Groves by the way he acted in public - telling Groves his "breath stank" and pushing the theme of Groves being "a ginger". It did him no favours.

Fighting men never really get trained in PR and it can go badly wrong. DeGale, a year after his gold medal, was being painted as the villain. He has come back well and is going to earn the recognition he deserves next year.

What DeGale did late in November, defending his IBF super-middleweight title against Lucien Bute in Quebec, was also full of risk. It was a risk to make a first defence in the opponent's backyard, and his performance was always going to be compared with Carl Froch's five-round beating of Bute. Yet he looked top notch. Let us now celebrate his success.



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