

## Who's Running The WBA, Rod Serling?

Written by Rick Folstad  
Sunday, 06 October 2002 21:00

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It's like poking a dead dog with a stick. You're pretty sure there's no bite left in it, but you're a little concerned about the smell.

The WBA, maybe thinking no one would notice or even read it, has been tinkering with its heavyweight rankings, putting some humorous spins on its choices for the top heavyweights in the world.

It's as though the girls from "Romy and Michele's High School Reunion" somehow managed to hack into the WBA computer and changed the rankings based on who had the coolest-sounding names.

Fortunately, no one takes the WBA too seriously. Unfortunately, the WBA still hands out a few championship belts, and how you're ranked in the top 10 can determine whether or not you get the chance to fight for one of those belts and the purse that comes with it.

Starting from the top and going from the July ratings to the August ratings, we still have John Ruiz as the WBA heavyweight champ. Nice guy. Quiet. Boston kid. Hangs on you a lot in the ring when you're trying to hit him. The best heavyweight in the world? Sure. And Adam Sandler is the greatest thespian of our time. Ask Roy Jones why he wants to fight Ruiz, but won't share a cab with Lennox Lewis.

Coming in as the No.1 contender is Evander "I'm not going away" Holyfield. A great fighter and a legitimate ranking - in 1994.

At No. 2 is the ubiquitous pugilist known as "not rated."

What do you mean, not rated? Why not just move everyone up a spot? Who are you waiting for? This is the ace-in-the-hole for the WBA, gives them a little room if they need to make some late-night changes. They can suddenly decide to stick a guy in here if Don King needs a heavyweight "contender" real quick for one of his heavyweights.

No. 3? If you thought Nos. 1 and 2 were funny, wait until you hear this knee slapper. No. 3 used to be Vitaly Klitschko, who is not as good as his brother Wladimir, who isn't even in the top 15 of the WBA. Somehow, Larry Donald - a Don King fighter - is now at No. 3, moving up from No. 6 despite losing to Kirk Johnson, who somehow fell from No. 5 to No. 10.

Those silly girls.

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At No. 7 is Fres Oquendo. As Scott Shaffer of Fightnews wrote, "Since signing a contract with Don King Productions this year, Oquendo has been bumped up from 15th to 11th to seventh without fighting."

He hasn't fought since April when he was stopped by David Tua, who somehow managed to slip from No. 8 to No. 9, two spots behind Oquendo.

Note to Fres: Be patient. If you remain loyal to Don King, you could become the WBA heavyweight champion of the world without ever fighting again. Or at least you could slip into that mysterious No. 2 spot now being held by "not rated."

Then there's the Hasim Rahman storied climb toward the top of the heavyweight rankings. The last time Rahman won a fight was in April of 2001 when he shocked Lewis with one of those pool-hall right hands. Since that fight, he's 0-for-2, yet he somehow moved up from No. 10 to No. 5, ahead of Tua, who stopped him in 1998.

In case you were wondering, yes, Rahman is with Don King.

Is there a pattern forming here?

Much to the chagrin of the WBA, someone actually read their new rankings and noticed the sleight-of-hand. Kirk Johnson and his camp asked the WBA - headquartered in Venezuela - to come up with some answers.

According to the Muhammad Ali Act, sanctioning bodies have seven days to explain movements in its top-10 ratings. It's a federal law.

The WBA, realizing it might be in trouble, quickly responded.

In its most recent rankings, the WBA listed Muhammad Ali as the No. 2 heavyweight in the world.