

TYSON vs MASKAEV: Was There Ever A Doubt

Written by Frank Lotierzo
Tuesday, 22 April 2003 18:00

Xtra, Xtra, read all about it! Xtra, Xtra, read all about it! Mike "the Myth" Tyson signs to fight another weak-chinned opponent, who lacks confidence and is four years removed from his last meaningful win (Nov. 6, 1999 vs. Hasim Rahman). That's right, Oleg Maskaev, Mike "the Myth" Tyson's next opponent has been stopped in his last three significant fights. A quick review of Maskaev's record reveals that since Rahman, he's been KO'd by Kirk Johnson, Lance Whittaker, and Corey Sanders (not the current WBO champ). Maskaev is 3-3 in his last six fights, which makes him the perfect opponent for MTMT, (Mike "the Myth" Tyson). However, I must be fair to Maskaev, since his wins are over Brian Nix, David Vedder, and a stunning first round knockout over the 4-10 Errol Sadikovski. Was there ever a doubt it would be Maskaev?

Was there ever any question that when Ray Mercer and Oleg Maskaev were named as the potential opponents for MTMT to fight as part of a double main event with Lennox Lewis, that it would be Maskaev? Of course not. Why fight Mercer, one of the toughest heavyweights around who's only been stopped by Wladimir Klitschko, when you can fight a guy who has been stopped five times, and three of them have been in his last six bouts. This once again proves how MTMT has always taken the path of least resistance. This is the perfect fight to follow Etienne with. Maybe Maskaev will give him two rounds. This gives MTMT a ready-made excuse, so when Lewis knocks him out in the rematch, he can cry about not being ready. How in the hell is MTMT going to be more ready for Lewis in the rematch when he fights the likes of Etienne and Maskaev? What do these type fights do for him other than provide another payday? Is there the slightest doubt that Maskaev will not make it past the third round? Wouldn't it make more sense to fight someone who's going to fight back or at least give him some good hard rounds? We know that when MTMT gets in with Lewis, Lewis is not going to be afraid one bit, and he'll even punch back, something MTMT doesn't handle well psychologically. Was there ever a doubt it would be Maskaev?

There is only one reason for this. MTMT is afraid of facing a real opponent, because he fears he may get beat, blowing the monumental payday. This is nothing new. MTMT has always followed the same game plan: fight fighters he can intimidate who have no shot to compete, let alone win, in preparation for a title fight against a formidable fighter. He did this before facing Lewis the first time and he's doing it again before facing him in their rematch. It never changes and it never will. MTMT always finds an angle to put himself into a no lose situation before facing the fighters who come to win, and not just get paid. If MTMT really thought he had a shot to defeat Lewis in the rematch, he would fight one or two fights against fighters who are more than just walking heavy-bags with eyes! He refuses to do this because if he really puts forth his best effort and loses, his psyche can't handle it. Why should MTMT change from a proven strategy? He knows after he gets stopped for the fifth time that there will be plenty of fans who still believe that he could a been an all-time great and will make excuses for him. See, if he didn't go about it this way, his fans would have to accept that they were fooled by his tough talk and brilliantly orchestrated career. Was there ever a doubt it would be Maskaev?

The MTMT-Oleg Maskaev fight will provide nothing in regard to whether MTMT is ready for

TYSON vs MASKAEV: Was There Ever A Doubt

Written by Frank Lotierzo
Tuesday, 22 April 2003 18:00

Lennox Lewis or not. He will knock out Maskaev quickly because he can punch (power has never been his problem) and Maskaev has no chin at this point in his career. MTMT will get no rounds from Maskaev. He will most likely not even be hit or tested as long as the fight last. This is no way to prepare for a fighter who administered the worse beating of your career. If MTMT really thought he could beat Lewis and become the champion again, he would fight the fighters who could provide a real fight in hopes that it better prepares him for the resistance he will meet from Lewis. I can honestly say that when I heard Maskaev or Mercer would be MTMT's next opponent, I had not a morsel of doubt that it would be Maskaev. MTMT must hope that when he fights Lewis again maybe he can catch him with the big shot to which Lewis has sometimes been vulnerable, or maybe Lewis will be so sure of himself against MTMT that he doesn't train like he did for the first fight. Was there ever a doubt it would be Maskaev?