

Lewis-Klitschko: Why I'm Picking Lewis

Written by Frank Lotierzo

Thursday, 19 June 2003 18:00

Well finally, a heavyweight championship fight that we can get excited about, between two of the biggest fighters in the division. Lennox Lewis vs. Vitali Klitschko is a huge fight, hopefully it won't turn out to be a fight between one fighter who can't (Klitschko), and one who won't (Lewis).

This fight has it all, bragging rights, power, experience, and attitude. Remember, Vitali has been yelling for Lewis ever since he annihilated Tyson last June. In fact Klitschko took Lewis to court to try and make Lewis fight him. Lewis has said on many occasions that he was more than appalled by being brought to court by the Klitschko management team. I believe Lewis shows up ready for this reason alone but, I also think Lewis will be motivated because he doesn't want to chance suffering a defeat in his first fight since knocking out Tyson.

This is an interesting fight to try and handicap. Both fighters are big and can punch, they both fight cautiously and wait for their opponent to make a mistake; instead of going out and trying to force them into one. They both look to establish their jab to set up their power punches. One advantage Lewis has, is that he is not robotic like Vitali, Lewis is more fluid and balanced.

As per any Lewis fight, his chin has to be a concern, and at age 37 he could become an old man during the fight without warning. On the other hand, I can't forget that Klitschko threw in the towel versus Chris Byrd, despite leading in the fight by a comfortable margin. So both fighters bring something to the ring that the other can exploit.

As stated earlier, Klitschko fights very cautiously, especially early in the fight. This being the biggest fight of Vitali's life, I don't see him changing. Big fighters like Klitschko are made for Lewis. The more cautious they fight, the more assertive Lewis will fight. The fact that Klitschko fights straight up, may leave him vulnerable to be hit with Lewis' straight right hand, and nobody can say for sure whether or not Klitschko has a solid chin.

When evaluating this match up, it would seem the only two things that Klitschko has in his favor are age, being that he's six years younger than Lewis. He is also the bigger man at 6'8", holding a three-inch height advantage. However, I would argue that Klitschko's edge in size may be more a disadvantage than an advantage.

On Lewis' side, he holds the advantage in experience, has the faster hands, is the better boxer, and in my opinion is the better two-handed puncher. Lewis is also fighting to cement his legacy as an all-time great. He can't lose to Klitschko without his perception as an all-time great taking a hit. Klitschko is fighting to make his mark as a heavyweight champion, and to wash away the leftover stench from his defeat vs. Chris Byrd.

Though Lewis is not without flaws, he must be given credit for fighting his best in the biggest fights. Lennox has been picture perfect in the big spot throughout his career, going all the way back to his amateur days.

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I have to go with Lewis in this fight. He just has to many things to beat Vitali with. Lewis can win by boxing, or by slugging. Lewis also has the championship fight experience and guile to pull himself through if a crisis were to arise. Another thing Lewis has shown as of late is finding and exposing his opponents weakness and vulnerabilities. I see Lewis being more able to adjust to the unexpected than Klitschko. Unless Lewis ages dramatically during the fight, or his chin betrays him, I see him stopping Klitschko. And yes, his chin has to be considered in the equation since it has failed him twice miserably.

I'll go with Lewis in the belief he doesn't let Klitschko get to it without paying a huge price trying. Lewis stops Klitschko within five!

Writers Note

Given my track record when it comes to picking the winner in fights involving Lennox Lewis, I guess Klitschko just became the biggest lock in heavyweight history?