

Ruiz Against Golota Not Exactly Ali-Frazier

Written by Rick Folstad

Thursday, 14 October 2004 18:00

How did this fight slip by the commission, the moody guys upstairs in the cheap suits with the rubber stamp and the vacant stares? Didn't anyone check the names, ask questions, suggest alternatives?

Didn't anyone on the commission stand up and make a bold statement about what kind of example could be set if this sort of thing was allowed to proceed?

I'm not saying John Ruiz and Andrew Golota shouldn't be allowed to make an honest living in the prize ring, but let's look at this from the perspective of true fight fans. Individually, one is as exciting as garden mulch and the other can be as dirty as Old McDonald's boots. Put them together in the same ring on the same night and, well, that might be scary. You don't know what's going to happen, whether to grab your pillow or call the cops.

This isn't Ali - Frazier. These guys aren't legends in their own time. If they're not careful, a fight could break out, and we all know what could happen then. We'll fall asleep on the couch watching Ruiz, or file charges against Golota.

Nov. 13 at Madison Square Garden. WBA champ Ruiz (40-5-1, 28 KOs) versus Golota (38-4-1, 31 KOs) in a Don King promotion. Mark it on your calendar. I'm betting it's the day Joe Louis actually spins in his grave.

Let's start with Ruiz. He's a nice guy and a world champion and he's actually beaten some pretty good heavyweights, though he did get bruised up by Roy Jones, Jr. Remember him?

Ruiz doesn't threaten children, rob banks, pass bad checks or kick stray dogs. He just puts you to sleep. Quickly and deeply. You're yawning before the opening bell, dozing off before the end of the first round.

If there's a better cure for insomnia than a Ruiz fight, it's a well-kept secret. This guy could put an entire church choir to sleep right in the middle of a rousing rendition of "Jingle Bells."

Ruiz doesn't punch as much as he clutches and spins. If you squint real hard when you watch him fight, you can almost convince yourself he's a dancing instructor teaching an unruly student how to waltz.

"First bow, then throw a punch, then grab with both hands around the shoulders and spin. Now, while you're still hugging each other, move two steps to your left and three steps back and two forward. Now, do it all over again."

As for Golota, he cleaned up his act against Chris Byrd earlier this year, but he didn't have to fight dirty. Low blows weren't necessary. Byrd isn't exactly the knockout artist Riddick Bowe was. Or is.

Ruiz Against Golota Not Exactly Ali–Frazier

Written by Rick Folstad

Thursday, 14 October 2004 18:00

Of course, neither is Ruiz, and that might be the best thing he has going for him. If Golota isn't getting tagged and doesn't feel like he's in trouble against Ruiz, he probably won't let his punches wander south of the border. He'll stay to the north where it's safe and legal, knowing that the threat of getting his bell rung by Ruiz is somewhere between remote and not a chance.

But in a worst-case scenario, we could see the actual collapse of the heavyweight division. Imagine it. Ruiz is clinching and hanging onto Golota, who is tired of all the dancing. So he starts dropping his shoulder and landing his punches somewhere south of what's allowed.

This could become the ugliest fight of all time.

Or worse, the most boring.