Written by Frank Lotierzo
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A few weeks back it was announced that IBF heavyweight champ Chris Byrd is going to defend his title against Andrew Golota on April 17th at Madison Square Garden. I only have one question, WHY? Byrd has carved out a career in which he has always sought and fought the best fighters. Or he has at least tried too. The last time we saw Golota in a big spot, he was quitting in his corner against Mike Tyson back in late 2000.

In his fight with Tyson, Golota wasn't doing badly. After getting up from a big Tyson overhand right in the second round, Golota fought with his corner and quit before the start of the third. Which is really foolish in a fight with Tyson. Tyson throughout his career has always been the most dangerous in the first and second rounds. Once a fighter gets through the early rounds with Tyson, the better the chances they have of winning. Tyson actually becomes less effective the longer the fight goes, and he loses some of his power. This is the complete opposite of past swarmers like Sharkey, Marciano, and Frazier. They weren't as ferocious as Tyson in the first couple rounds, but they got stronger and better as the fight progressed.

You would think Golota being the head case that he is, making it past the first couple rounds with Tyson would boost his confidence. No doubt the plan was to try and extend Tyson into the second half of the fight. Nope, not Golota. He quits at the time when he may actually have the best chance to win? Every time I think of some four round fighter getting up again and again for a couple hundred dollars, I think of this dog quitting for his millions against Tyson, and folding against Grant.

Since losing to Tyson, Golota has fought exactly two times after not fighting for three years. In his first fight he fought 18-10 Brian Nix, who he stopped in the seventh round. After Nix he fought 31-13-1 Terrence Lewis and stopped him in the sixth round. These two fights took place in August and November of 2003. I guess being active and connected carries a lot of weight. Actually there is no guessing about it, we know it means everything. I just can't believe that Golota can get a title shot based off of beating Nix and Lewis. Maybe it's true, nobody wants to fight Chris Byrd, even if it's for a title? How about signing with Don King in mid February and fighting for a title in mid April? That sounds more like it.

The whole Golota mystique has always escaped me. I never thought that he was so terrific. For a big guy he was pretty mobile and a decent boxer. However, he wasn't that fast nor was he a great puncher, and I have always questioned his chin and endurance. Other than against Riddick Bowe, who as an empty package when he fought him, who has he beat that is so good that affords him the press and hype that has usually accompanied him? Even in his fights with Bowe, especially the second one, he hit Bowe a million times and couldn't finish an already finished Bowe. In fact in their rematch, Bowe stretched Golota with one right hand after getting pounded.

In his next fight after the Bowe rematch, he was demolished by Lennox Lewis in one round. The fight with Lewis was one that more than a few picked him to win. After winning two

unanimous decisions over inexperienced Corey Sanders and a 40 year old Tim Witherspoon, he fought Michael Grant. Golota put Grant down twice in the first round and almost finished him early. However, Grant showed much heart and weathered the storm and came back to stop Golota in the 10th round. Since beating Golota, Grant has regressed and is not even part of the heavyweight picture at this time. How special does a fighter have to be to get by Golota?

In his next fight after losing to Grant, he fought journeyman Marcus Rhode in China and stopped him in three rounds. After fighting Rhode, he decisions Orlin Norris. After beating Norris he fights Tyson and folds like a two dollar suit in a Hurricane. This is the body of work authored by Andrew Golota. Just how does he warrant a title shot, and why should any Boxing fans even care about him. He hasn't proven a thing since the Tyson fight. Other than having a familiar name, and a cult fan base, there is no reason for him to challenge for a title.

Again, the hype over Golota has always escaped me. If I look at him as a fighter, he's pretty good. However, he has lost miserably in every really big fight of his career. What is the dynamic about him that draws fans? Is it his skin pigmentation? I certainly hope not. Is it that he looks like Killer Ivan Drago from the Movie Rocky IV? Maybe that's it. He looks like a fictional fighter who also got taken apart when the pressure was turned up.

I just don't see it. I never thought Golota was anything special, and always felt he was very overrated by some fans and members of the press. He lost to every good fighter he ever fought, and in a terrible fashion to some. Just never saw why there was such a fuss over him.

I guess if he's in good shape his fight with Byrd could be interesting. I want to believe that he has no shot of winning, but I know better. Byrd is much smaller than him and isn't enough of a puncher to scare him. I would even be willing to bet that Golota will enter the ring versus Byrd very confident. Won't be surprised a bit if Golota doesn't embarrass himself in this fight. One thing is certain, all Golota has to do in this fight is not lose badly. A good showing, despite a loss will keep him around longer than I'd like to think.