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We are now three quarters of the way through this month of Heavyweight title bouts. We've had one shocking upset, Brewster coming back to stop Wladimir Klitschko. One fight that went pretty much as expected, the Ruiz-Oquendo push, punch, miss, grab-fest. And one outstanding fight, Byrd-Golota.

The Byrd-Golota bout was really outstanding. It never fails to happen in boxing. When expectations are high, the fight never lives up to them. However, sometimes when the expectations are low, the realization exceeds the expectation which was the case in Byrd vs. Golota. I for one was very critical of this fight.

I hammered Byrd for taking it, I hammered King for making it, and I killed Golota for being Golota. Yet the fight turned out to be the only memorable one of the three that was fought on a championship level. I must say that Andrew Golota was never in better shape and more purposeful. This didn't surprise me a bit. Most felt that Byrd was the perfect fight for Golota to resurrect his career against. After all, Golota had a nearly 30 pound weight advantage and 4 inches in height.

That being said, I won't diminish Golota's showing. The fact that Byrd did make him fight the whole way and even pressured him mentally, shows that for now Golota's past is just that, past. It will be very interesting to see how Golota holds up when he's in there with a fighter who has the power and is a threat to hurt him or knock him out. One thing is for sure, we'll surely get to see it in the not too distant future. Another thing for sure is that both the career's of Chris Byrd and Andrew Golota got a shot in the arm.

What We've Learned In The Last Three Title Fights:

Lamon Brewster showed he is very tough and can hit, but questions still exist about the rest of his game. However, going from what he showed versus Wladimir Klitschko, he deserves some props and shouldn't automatically be omitted from future big fight consideration. Brewster's power and toughness make him a live dog against anyone in the division.

Wladimir Klitschko confirmed, at least to me, that his durability is definitely an issue and will hinder him from ever being the man in the heavyweight division. Wlad has a tremendous offensive attack, but in the heavyweight division there must be a strong beard as a last line of defense. I just don't think it's there regarding Wladimir, on top of that his confidence is shot. Every time he goes into the ring now versus a dangerous opponent, he'll question himself when he gets hurt or shook. This will only swell his opponents confidence and encourage them to raise their game. And in regards to the medical reports, I'm not buying them, at least not yet. As regimented as the Klitschko's are with their training and health, no way this just showed up. We know why Wladimir has been stopped by Puritty, Sanders, and Brewster. And it has nothing to do with Blood Sugar!

John Ruiz continues to roll on. Keep him away from an outstanding boxer or puncher and he's 50-50 to win on any night. Ruiz is one of the most difficult heavyweight's to watch I've ever seen. Yet he must be given some credit. He is a tough guy and gets out whatever ability he has inside him. We just trash him because he doesn't dazzle us with flash and brilliance, or awesome power that blows fighters out. That being said, Ruiz is a factor in this uninspiring division. No, I don't believe he is a major force in it, but he has to be addressed and can't be overlooked.

Fres Oquendo has shown again that although a skilled heavyweight, he just always comes up a Bridesmaid. He had Tua beat but couldn't finish, he was leading Byrd going into the last three rounds but didn't finish strong causing him to lose a close controversial decision. Against Ruiz he was boxing smart and was leading before getting caught and stopped. It's too bad he couldn't keep Ruiz off him coming down the stretch, because after the third round he discovered that Ruiz had no answer for his jab. I actually had Oquendo slightly ahead when the fight was stopped. I was surprised to see that some of the writers next to me and the judges had Ruiz leading. I won't say it's an outrage, but I did think Fres was in control when the fight was stopped.

Andrew Golota has definitely resurrected his career. He showed up in tremendous shape for Chris Byrd. He fought a smart fight with purpose and determination. He exhibited the skill that many have talked of during his career. He is a big strong guy who throws good combinations and has some power. If Golota maintains his composure, we'll see him in some big fights down the road. Right now consider Golota a factor in the heavyweight picture.

Chris Byrd is the fighter I've been impressed with the most so far over the past two weekends of championship boxing. Look, we all know that he is a slick and cunning boxer. He is the master at taking away his opponents strength's. However, what I'm starting to notice is that he is a fighter in the purest form. This guy is as tough as they come both mentally and physically, this cannot be denied or overlooked! Byrd as usual accepts a fight with anybody who comes down the pike who is a perceived threat.

In his last fight he faced a very big and strong, and most importantly focused Andrew Golota. In fact Golota put pressure on Byrd in this fight and used all of his physical advantages and strengths to try and break him down both physically and mentally. And ya know what, Byrd was having none of it. Not once did I see Byrd really hurt or shook, not once did I see him have that look in his eye that said I wanna be somewhere else, despite the bombs that Golota was throwing and sometimes landing. Face it, Byrd likes a good rumble. The fact that Golota had 4 inches in height and 30 pounds in weight didn't faze or alter him in the least. Chris Byrd is a formidable fighter, not just because he's a skilled and smart boxer, but because he's tough. Muhammad Ali gets credit for being highly skilled, yet he won many fights because he was tougher mentally and physically than some of the best opponents he ever fought. I happen to see the same character in Chris Byrd, he is a fighter.

Quick Story: It was somewhere around 1997 while at work a friend asked me what I thought of Chris Byrd as a heavyweight contender. I said forget him, he's not big enough and doesn't have the power to be a major factor in heavyweight division. I said once he's in with one of the bigger,

stronger more skilled upper-tier heavyweight's, he's done. They'll walk him down and go right through him. Obviously it was not one of my better moments in evaluating one of boxings best. I no longer work for the same company and don't have contact with that person any longer. Wonder if he thinks back and laughs at what I said when he sees Byrd coming off of fights like the recent one against Golota?

This coming weekend Vitali Klitschko fights Corrie Sanders. At this time Byrd and Golota have stolen the thunder from the other four heavyweights who have fought. Right now it looks like it's Byrd, Golota, and the Klitschko-Sanders winner moving to the front of the pack.