

Wladimir Klitschko - Much Ado About Nothing

Written by Joey Knish
Monday, 12 April 2004 21:00

Lennox Lewis, please come back.

Unless Vitali Klitschko dazzles, amazes, and otherwise has me in awe on April 24th when he faces hard-hitting Corrie Sanders, the heavyweight division will be officially stamped a barren wasteland of broken promises and unfulfilled dreams.

This past Saturday the city of Los Angeles gained a heavyweight champion as Lamon Brewster absorbed a four round beating from Wladimir Klitschko, yet emerged as the new WBO Heavyweight Champion. Sure, Brewster's dream of becoming a heavyweight champion has been realized, but for the fans it was a just another bad dream.

When I look at the division that Lennox ruled for so many years, it now appears a kingdom ruled by commoners. Brewster is as nice a commoner as there is, but that doesn't make him royalty, and I doubt he will wear the crown for long. This is the same Lamon Brewster who was battered and beaten by Clifford Etienne and who was out-pointed by resume-filling Charles Shufford.

How Brewster got the title shot is one thing. Since being beaten by Shufford, Lamon beat a guy named Joey (actually named Joey Guy), the now retired Nate Jones, the soon to be retired Willie Chapman, Tommy Martin and recently 9-17-3 Joe Lenhart. How he won the title is almost as strange a path.

Other than showing the ability to eat heavy jabs and the occasional right hand hammer, Lamon Brewster didn't show me much to demonstrate he has the skills of a champion. The heart, perhaps; the skills, no. He just lasted longer in a battle of 'who will fall first?' ... Brewster, from the beating he was taking, or Klitschko, from exhaustion. In the end Klitschko blinked first, and the next time Brewster steps between the ropes he will be announced as the WBO Heavyweight Champion.

Wladimir Klitschko showed us what we already knew. He has a heavy jab, bigger right, questionable chin, poor stamina, and may next appear in the Wizard of Oz as the Tin Man. You know how that song goes, "if I only had a heart" . . . but if there is any dancing involved forget it, Klitschko has no shake in his milk.

The younger of the Klitschko brothers now has three defeats as he also punched himself out and threw in the towel against Ross Puritty. He was then made to look amateurish against the South African Sanders, who knocked him down four times, and now he has been defeated again after collapsing this past Saturday.

Big brother Vitali takes on the crafty left-hander Sanders at the Staples Center in Los Angeles on April 24th. Vitali has gained respect from the boxing public for losing his battle with King Lennox and then disposing of over-stuffed, Canadian Kirk Johnson. Somewhere in his past

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Vitali Klitschko quit after the 9th round against Chris Byrd while ahead on the cards 88-83 (twice) and 89-82 on the other. Byrd took that fight on a week's notice and took Vitali's title as 'Dr. Ironfist' self-diagnosed himself unable to continue.

One might expect a champion to continue if all he had to do in order to keep his title was hold his arm up and jab with the other for nine minutes. Vitali did not. I imagine Evander Holyfield and a host of other fighters would have soldiered on. Besides, it's not like the feather-fisted 1992 Olympic Middleweight Byrd, at all of 6' 1", was going to seriously hurt the 6' 7" giant.

Still, at least until the clock strikes midnight on the 24th of April, Vitali Klitschko appears to be the last man standing. In a Heavyweight division that is 'heavy' in titles and 'weighted' with mediocrity, let's hope he is explosively impressive.