

Wayne Braithwaite Keeps On Big Truckin'

Written by Robert Ecksel

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A couple of cruiserweight champs get it on this Saturday, April 2, on Showtime. Undefeated WBC cruiserweight champion Wayne "Big Truck" Braithwaite meets WBA cruiserweight champion Jean-Marc Mormeck in a world title unification bout at the DCU Center in Worcester, Massachusetts. The fight begins 11 PM/ET.

Braithwaite went 57-3 as an amateur in his native Guyana. He won a gold medal at the Pan American Games. He was four-time National Golden Gloves champion. He won the Junior Caribbean Games in 1993. He turned pro in 1997 at the age of eighteen and he's been winning ever since.

In addition to being cruiserweight champion, he has won 15 of his last 16 fights by knockout.

I asked Colin Morgan, one of the champ's trainers, about Wayne Braithwaite.

"Wayne is not a one-dimensional fighter," Morgan told me. "He can do anything. He can fight lefty or righty. He can attack. He can box. He comes to punch. He could make the best person look bad if he wants to by just making them miss punches. And then he can make you look bad by getting serious and punching you too. Wayne got started at the age of eighteen. At twenty he turned pro. And at twenty-six he became world champion. So he's got everything intact. His brain is intact. He's not a beat up fighter."

Braithwaite is also not a defeated fighter. He won the title on October 11, 2002 from Vincenzo Cantatore at the Casino Di Campione in Italy. They traded leather in Italia, but Braithwaite was dropping bombs. He scored a TKO in the tenth round. We had a new champ.

Wayne Braithwaite keeps winning, but he is just getting started: "I want to unify the belts. I am the man in the division. And if I have to go through everybody to prove it, I will. This is a division that needs a spark, and I am it."

Jean-Marc Mormeck, of Noisy-le-Grand, France, with his 30-2 (21 KOs) record is no pushover. He has won 27 fights in a row.

"Mormeck is nothing," Braithwaite said. "I am not worried about him at all. He is a very strong fighter, but he does not know how to move his head. He has got only one style. He is not a complete fighter. My best quality is that I can fight both ways. I have skills. I am a boxer-puncher. He has never fought anyone who moves or has hand speed like me."

Mormeck defeated defending champion Virgil Hill to capture the WBA crown on February 23, 2002.

"My goal is to be unified cruiserweight champion," Mormeck said. "I want to fight the best so I can prove I belong with the sport's elite champions. Braithwaite is very good, but I am better. I

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hope he has enjoyed his title and benefited from it because after our fight on April 2, it is going to be mine.

Mormeck isn't just talking. He has a plan.

"I will put constant pressure on Braithwaite and fight my fight," he said. "I will prevent him from moving the way he usually does. I am not going to let him play with his straight left hand. I am not going to let him get into a rhythm."

Wayne "Big Truck" Braithwaite has other ideas: "I am going to make Mormeck's big head a punching bag. I guarantee that I will still be undefeated after the fight. But I am not going to box him. I am going to knock him out."