

Court Denies Klitschko IBF Title Shot

Written by JE Grant
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Wladimir Klitschko lost his court fight to be installed as the next contender for the IBF heavyweight title yesterday.

According to an AP report, "After hearing two days of arguments, U.S. District Judge William Martini denied Klitschko's request in an opinion filed Tuesday in Newark."

The IBF had argued that Williamson, although he had been beaten by Klitschko (L Tech Dec 5, Oct. 2, 2004), nevertheless deserved to leapfrog over Klitschko in the latest rankings.

What is by far the most ludicrous aspect of the IBF's argument is that Williamson supposedly is worthy of this change because he recently beat a ranked contender, Derrick Jefferson, while Klitschko won a fight over an unranked Eliseo Castillo.

Of course Klitschko may have done okay against Jefferson as well. The evidence? Klitschko knocked-down Jefferson three times enroute to a second round stoppage in Mar. 24, 2001 in Germany. The bout was never close.

(As an aside, Jefferson himself has never scored a victory over a ranked fighter in his career.)

For those of you unfamiliar with Williamson, he has tinkered at the edges of the ratings before with wins over tough journeymen Robert Wiggins (W 10, Jan. 10, 2003) and Corey Sanders (the American version) (KO 5, July 26, 2002).

Those wins garnered him a shot at undefeated Joe Mesi. He was pounded into submission in one round Sept. 26, 2003.

Since that devastating loss, he has beaten journeymen in addition to his loss to Klitschko. Certainly he's done nothing to indicate a top rating.

For the record, the IBF's top two contenders, Hasim Rahman and Monte Barrett are considered unavailable because they've signed to fight for the ridiculous "interim" WBC heavyweight belt.

Curiously, Barrett also had a meeting with Wladimir Klitschko. Barrett was pounded mercilessly, hitting the deck five times enroute to a seventh-round stoppage July 15, 2000.

Further, we should not forget that Klitschko was seeking the right to face the sitting champion, Chris Byrd.

To make you scratch your head even harder, consider that Klitschko also crushed Byrd when the two met Oct. 14, 2000. Klitschko pitched a near-shutout over 12 rounds for Byrd's WBO belt.

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Klitschko is ranked by each of the so-called major sanctioning bodies: WBC #10; IBF #4; WBO #2; and WBA #11.

With a sitting judge making such a bizarre ruling boxing fans now have a dose of what it will be like when a federal commission takes over – people who have absolutely no understanding of boxing making absolutely asinine decisions.

We will now see a Byrd-Williamson fight for a “world” championship. Both have been beaten soundly by Klitschko yet he is the one on the outside.

Why should it matter if much of the boxing world already sees the alphabets as of secondary importance? Because the casual boxing fan sees today’s court ruling and wonders why he should bother scraping together the price for a ticket if he continually sees the sport as farcical.

The general sports fan pays for the pay-per-views, attends local cards, and talks about fights at the water cooler on Monday mornings. Without them the sport will continue on a path toward obscurity. Many of even the biggest fights are no longer mentioned on local TV sports, receive only perfunctory mention in daily newspapers, and are completely gone from network TV.

If you think this sort of ruling has no effect, think again. It’s just one more shot to the body of the world’s oldest sport.