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Promoter hype often varies from the plausible to the hysterical, and when Scottish super featherweight Alex Arthur assumed the “Amazing” prefix and destroyed decent Hungarian Laszlo Bognar back in 2001, there were few doubters of the young Edinburgh fighter’s pedigree and potential.

Pragmatism was lost amongst the plaudits; after all, the same Hungarian had beaten firebrand British champion Michael Gomez earlier that same year. A subsequent victory over stubborn Pole Dariusz Snarski for an IBF intercontinental belt did little to diffuse the Scot’s growing popularity and reputation. In retrospect it would be easy to relay the then 23-year-old’s tendency to leave his chin exposed, but he was presented as a future world champion by SKY television and his promoters Sports Network … and the bandwagon had a waiting list for seats.

Now four years on, Alex Arthur belatedly arrives at the periphery of world-class when he faces veteran Muscovite Boris Sinitsin, a fighter seasoned enough to be in his third reign as European champion. If Arthur is successful he will be the first Scottish fighter to hold the British, Commonwealth and European crowns since flyweight Jackie Paterson in 1946.

But hang on. If Arthur was winning intercontinental belts four years ago, why has it take so long to reach European level?

Aside from leaving the tutelage of Peter Harrison (father and trainer of WBO featherweight champion Scott Harrison) under a cloud, and the apparent evaporation of his flimsy liaison with American trainer Freddie Roach, Alex Arthur faced the greatest challenge an unbeaten prospect ever faces. He got beat, but he didn’t just lose, he was overwhelmed. The same Michael Gomez who appeared finished following defeat to Kevin Lear the preceding year, pummelled him from pillar to post, and despite his bravado and showmanship, Arthur couldn’t punch or grin his way out of trouble and was stopped in the fifth round of a torrid fight.

Arthur’s confidence had grown into arrogance. He’d underestimated Gomez’s tenacity and power and fought the Mancunian’s fight, and the amateurish habit of hanging out his chin, overlooked whilst he was knocking people out, came home to roost. Arthur soon found his popularity a fickle companion. The bandwagon emptied as pundits and fans protected their credibility with a doggedness Arthur could have used in the ring. To a man they distanced themselves from the forlorn Arthur, proclaiming “I knew he’d get chinned eventually, it was obvious.” Why do the critics never admit they were just plain wrong or that the hype and twinkling shorts had blinded them to a fighter’s weaknesses?

For many, defeat serves to improve focus and highlight weakness and a resilient character will turn the negative into positive. For others, defeat is the end. They may fight on but the self-belief, that quintessential quality for a fighter, is lost.

The trouble for Arthur – and for fellow Scottish fighters Scot Harrison, Craig Docherty and Willie

Limond – is that not only must he compete for the hearts, minds and wallets of the Scottish public, but he also follows in the footsteps of two of the greatest fighters to ever grace a British ring: Ken Buchanan and Jim Watt.

You see the Scots know a thing or two about boxing, and in lightweight greats Buchanan and Watt they enjoyed and supported two of the noble art's finest exponents.

Buchanan, who fought and beat Ismael Laguna and Carlos Ortiz, stopped Carlos Hernandez, tackled a prime Roberto Duran and topped the bill at Madison Square Garden, would be a hard act for any fighter to follow. Jim Watt, who lost a 15 round decision to Buchanan in 1973, arguably matched his achievements by winning a world title and facing Sean O'Grady, Alexis Arguello and highly touted Howard Davis Jr. along the way. Greats like Buchanan and Watt cast long shadows for subsequent generations.

By the time Buchanan was 27, the age Arthur is now, he was tackling Roberto Duran and his "borderline" body shots. This unfavourable comparison suggests Arthur really needs to win tomorrow night and inject some momentum into his career. Although Buchanan lost his first crack at a European crown and Watt his first two at the British title, those facts will offer hope that he can still aspire to world title honours despite the Gomez defeat. Winning the European crown carries gravitas with the major sanctioning bodies and Arthur should expect to reside in most of their top tens come Monday morning if he can outwit or out-punch the veteran Russian tomorrow.

Since his loss to Gomez, Arthur has been studiously rebuilt with stoppage wins over the overmatched Ugandan Michael Kizza (KO1), rugged Ghanaian Eric Odumase (TKO6), a points victory over Argentinean Nazareno Ruiz, and most notably his recent knockout of fellow Scot Craig Docherty (KO9). All of these bouts have helped rehabilitate Arthur and his confidence has visibly returned with every bout. But now, as a mature fighter, he needs to couple that confidence with respect.

His defence, whilst far from impregnable, appears improved, and although Sinitsin is not a knockout puncher, he's cute and more than capable of stealing rounds. Their respective performances against Craig Doherty – both fighters' most recent contest – suggest Arthur has the edge. Sinitsin outlasted Docherty, who couldn't quite find the extra gear to take the much-travelled champion out of his comfort zone; he took a split decision whilst Arthur stopped Docherty in nine rounds.

Ricky Hatton's recent high-octane performance against Kostya Tszyu has encouraged every fight fan to suggest replicating Hatton's output is the way to beat aging champions. Of course, not everyone is Ricky Hatton. Arthur will need to be positive but disciplined early on and increase the pressure on an ageing Sinitsin as the fight develops. He's a heavier puncher than Docherty, and whilst it's unlikely Arthur can knockout Sinitsen – only classy Frenchman Julien Lorcy has ever stopped the champion – a late round stoppage is plausible if Arthur utilises his youth, speed and power to wear down the champion gradually.

Sinitsin has been circumspect about his chances, especially with his manager failing to instil

confidence with her proclamation that “he may win, he may lose, but so may Arthur.” If the Russian is contemplating retirement, and at 34 with over 50 bouts on his ledger it wouldn’t be a surprise, then Arthur may just be in the right place at the right time.

Whether he can ever live up to his initial promise or the truly “amazing” careers of his illustrious predecessors Buchanan and Watt remains to be seen. But doubtless the two sprightly former champions will be sitting ringside to watch him try.