

Bob Arum's Love Affair with Women's Boxing

Written by Matthew Aguilar
Sunday, 24 July 2005 19:00

So the ladies' "superfight" between Christy Martin and Lucia Rijker is off. The boxing world isn't exactly reeling.

Bob Arum had sold a reported 500 tickets to the "Million Dollar Ladies" card – his lame attempt to capitalize on the success of the movie "Million Dollar Baby." Wasn't it Arum a few years back who was cringing at the thought of women getting nailed in the face? Of course, that was back when Martin was a star, and a property of Don King. Arum had no financial interest in women's boxing back then.

Now, years later, he's willing to put together an entire card with women being the centerpiece. And he was offering it up on pay-per-view, no less. That's quite a turnaround.

Women's boxing is ok, apparently, if Arum can make money off of it. Never mind that the Martin-Rijker fight should've taken place five years ago. Never mind that both fighters are 37 years old and years past their respective primes.

They'll buy it anyway, right?

Not quite. Five-hundred tickets? It makes you giggle.

Which begs the question: Did Rijker actually tear her Achilles? Or did Arum, after seeing that the lines for the men's room at Slots-a-Fun were longer than lines for "Million Dollar Lady" tickets, convince Rijker to fake it so that he could shut down this ridiculous promotion and cut his losses?

Ok, ok. So she actually had surgery. Good thing for Arum. Pay-per-view sales, and attendance, would have been an embarrassment.

ANOTHER TITLE SHOT FOR MITCHELL?

Why is Sharmba Mitchell getting another title shot? And why is he fighting for the welterweight title, when he's spent his career at junior welterweight?

The last time we saw Mitchell in a meaningful fight, he was getting his head handed to him by then-junior welterweight king Kostya Tszyu last November. Everyone knew Mitchell's only chance at victory was to box. So what'd he do? He rumbled with the hard-punching Tszyu. And deservedly got knocked out.

It was one of the most disappointing – and pathetic – performances of 2004.

Since then, Mitchell has beaten Chris Smith, a capable welterweight with a 19-1-1 record going in, on cuts. Somehow, that qualifies him for his second title shot in three fights.

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Is this another breather for Judah, who got a free pass against the overmatched Cosme Rivera in May? How many tune-ups does an undisputed champ and one of the best fighters in boxing need? Fight Margarito or Shane Mosley already, Zab. No one's much interested in watching Sharmba Mitchell choke in another title fight.

The biggest question going in is: Which will be the first to crack? Mitchell's knee, or his chin.

DiBELLA ON HOPKINS

Lou DiBella isn't five seconds removed from calling former charge Bernard Hopkins a lowlife when he comes out with this jewel.

"But I'm happy to be one up on that bastard," DiBella said of Hopkins. "Yeah, I am."

Yeah, and you're all class, Lou.

CORRALES-CASTILLO TO COLLIDE AGAIN

So much for all the supposed concern from promoters who weren't quite sure whether a Diego Corrales-Jose Luis Castillo rematch should be made after their brutal first war. It's a fight the entire boxing world wants to see. But you have to be concerned with the well-being of the two combatants after May 7. And you have to wonder if an Oct. 8 fight is a long enough rest for them. Even at the press conference announcing the rematch, Corrales and Castillo had a look on their faces like, "We have to do this again?" Here's to hoping that neither is seriously hurt in the rematch.

BOXING TAKES A BREATHER

After a summer in which there was a big fight almost every weekend, boxing is on something of a hiatus until Aug. 6, when Jeff Lacy takes on Robin Reid.