

## Liakhovich Injured; Ray Austin to Face “What the Heck” Beck

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CLEVELAND (August 19, 2005) — Cleveland native and heavyweight contender Ray “Rainman” Austin got a call today that most boxers only dream of when his promoter, Don King, notified him that another boxer had suffered an injury, paving the way for him to step into the co-featured main event for the USNBC heavyweight championship on Sept. 3 at Gund Arena against World Boxing Council No.7-ranked heavyweight contender Owen “What the Heck” Beck, which will be televised domestically on SHOWTIME at 9 pm. ET/PT (delayed on the West Coast).

“I was very excited to get the shot and it’s even better that it will take place in my hometown of Cleveland,” Austin (22-3-3, 15 KOs) said. “I am going to make the most of my opportunity. I’m coming to knock Owen Beck out. I’m not playing.”

Beck (24-1, 18 KOs) had been scheduled to face Sergei “White Wolf” Liakhovich. The Belarussian heavyweight sparred on Wednesday in Las Vegas and awoke in severe pain with a swollen chest yesterday, and visited a doctor who advised he had sustained a bruised cartilage injury to his rib cage and will not be able to resume training for four weeks.

In a wide-open heavyweight division, the winner of this important heavyweight match could be in line for a world title fight.

The other half of the co-featured main event is a World Boxing Council and an International Boxing Federation cruiserweight elimination bout between former WBC cruiserweight champion Wayne “Big Truck” Braithwaite and Guillermo “El Felino” Jones. This fight will also be shown domestically on SHOWTIME.

Beck, originally from Jamaica now living in Nashville, Tenn., was undefeated with 24 wins, but untested against proven competition, before stepping into the ring against the more seasoned Monte “Two Gunz” Barrett in St. Louis on Feb. 5 in an elimination bout with a world title shot going to the winner.

Barrett scored a second-round flash knockdown, but Beck regained his composure and rocked Barrett in the middle rounds, coming very close at one point to a knock down. Beck’s performance was strong enough to be ahead on one of the judges’ scorecards before succumbing to Barrett by technical knockout in round nine.

Austin is coming off an impressive performance for the USNBC heavyweight championship at Madison Square Garden against Larry “The Legend” Donald that resulted in a hard-fought draw on April 30.

His only losses came in his first match as a professional in 1998, a controversial decision against Harold Sconiers after knocking him down three times in a six-round fight in 2000, and against Attila “The Hun” Levin in 2001. He has not lost since.

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Another notable fight for Austin ended in a draw against Lance “Mount” Whitaker in 2002.

“I beat Larry Donald at the Garden in April and I beat Lance Whitaker as clear as day—with a broken left hand,” Austin said about two of his fights that ended in draws. “I’m ready to send a wake-up call to the heavyweight division.”

Braithwaite (21-1, 15 KOs), from Brooklyn, N.Y., by way of Guyana, had been invincible in all of his contests prior to his last bout. He won the vacant WBC cruiserweight title by defeating Vincenzo Cantatore in Italy in 2002 and easily defended his title three times before entering a world title unification match against Jean-Marc Mormeck in Worcester, Mass., on April 2.

Braithwaite put his WBC crown and undefeated record on the line against the WBA champion Mormeck, the first and only man to enter the ring looking bigger and stronger than the strapping Braithwaite. The two pounded it out for 12 rounds, but it was Mormeck who walked off with the unanimous decision and titles.

Braithwaite has chosen a difficult opponent to get back on the winning track in the slick veteran Jones, (32-3-2, 25 KOs), from Colon, Panama. Jones last opponent was former International Boxing Federation cruiserweight champion Kelvin “Koncrete” Davis, who had just been stripped for inexplicably refusing to fight his mandatory challenger, O’Neill “Give ‘em Hell” Bell.

Jones disposed of Davis in impressive fashion with a shocking series of combinations in the fourth round that prompted referee John O’Brien to step in and halt the action.

Liakhovich (22-1, 14 KOs), a Belarussian now living in Scottsdale, Ariz., defeated then-undefeated champion Friday “The 13th” Ahunanya to take his North American Boxing Association heavyweight championship in 2001.

In his next appearance, the young Russian suffered his lone loss to the always dangerous spoiler Maurice “Mo Betta” Harris in 2002.

Liakhovich hasn’t lost since, racking up six wins in three years. In his last showing on Dec. 3 in Atlantic City, N.J., he came in as a slight underdog against rising prospect Dominick Guinn, but he sent a strong message to the heavyweight division by giving a dominating performance that led to victory by way of unanimous decision.

A typically stacked Don King Productions undercard will lead with the return of former IBF bantamweight champion “Cincinnati Kid” Tim Austin (25-1-1, 22 KOs), who hasn’t fought since suffering his first and only loss in 2003.

Don King Productions has promoted more than 500 world championship fights and holds the distinction of having promoted seven of the 10 largest pay-per-view events in history, as gauged by total buys, including: Holyfield vs. Tyson II, 1.95 million buys, June 1997; Tyson vs. Holyfield I, 1.6 million buys, November 1996; Tyson vs. McNeeley, 1.58 million buys, August 1995; and Bruno vs. Tyson, 1.4 million buys, March 1996.

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DKP promoted or co-promoted 12 of the top-20 highest-grossing live gates in the history of the state of Nevada including the top five: Holyfield vs. Lewis II, paid attendance: 17,078, gross: \$16,860,300 (NOTE: Also highest live-gate gross for any event in the history of the world.), date: Nov. 13, 1999; Holyfield vs. Tyson II, paid attendance: 16,279, gross: \$14,277,200, date: June 28, 1997; Holyfield vs. Tyson I, paid attendance: 16,103, gross: \$14,150,700, date: Nov. 9, 1996; Tyson vs. McNeeley, paid attendance: 16,113, gross: \$13,965,600, date: Aug. 19, 1995; and De La Hoya vs. Trinidad, paid attendance: 11,184, gross: \$12,949,500 (Also garnered the most pay-per-view buys for a non-heavyweight fight at 1.4 million.), date: Sept. 18, 1999.

Tickets priced at \$100, \$50 and \$25 are on sale now at the Gund Arena ticket office (where there is no service fee), all Ticketmaster locations, online at [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com), or charge by phone in Cleveland at (216) 241-2121 and in Akron at (330) 945-9400. For more information, log on to [www.GundArena.com](http://www.GundArena.com) or call the Gund Arena event information line at (216) 420-2200.