

Wladimir Klitschko vs. Sam Peter Heats Up

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In anticipation of the clash between Wladimir Klitschko and Samuel Peter in Atlantic City, the war of words between the factions has begun.

Confidence is the buzzword in the training camps of Samuel "The Nigerian Nightmare" Peter (24-0, 21 KOs) and Wladimir Klitschko (44-3, 40 KOs), as they prepare for their IBF and WBO fight. The two men meet September 24 at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City, New Jersey, an evening of fights presented by Duva Boxing, K-2 Promotions and Top Rank, in association with Caesars Atlantic City.

"Samuel's confidence is very, very high right now," says Peter's trainer, Andy "Pops" Anderson. "He's ready for this – big time. It's one of those things where the timing is really great. His confidence is way up there."

Anderson says that early on in this Reno, Nevada training camp, the focus is on getting Peter to remember the fundamentals. "Klitschko has one of those jabs that could be bothersome if you don't keep your basics together and keep your hands up, so we're working on basics right now: upper body movement and bobbing and weaving and always moving forward."

The key to victory, according to Anderson, is to make Klitschko wilt from the heat. "We want to make him fight. We don't want him holding and grabbing and that type of thing. We want him spending himself, so Sam is really working on getting in tiptop shape because he wants to go in and make this guy work."

Does Anderson predicts the fight will play out with his man moving closer and closer until he devours his prey.

"Samuel is one of those guys; he has the eye of the tiger. He just goes in there and whatever happens happens. He's there to win any way he can ... but I don't think he's looking for a long fight, I can tell you that."

Meanwhile, from high up in the Pocono Mountains, where he is helping former WBO champion Klitschko prepare for the biggest crossroads fight of his life, legendary trainer Emanuel Steward strongly disagrees: "Peter is going to be in with a class-A fighter this time. He thinks he'll overpower this guy, but believe me, that is not going to happen. Peter is going in with an experienced big man this time, and he's going to realize it's a big man because of the way we're going to control him. [Wladimir] is a very experienced man who is focused. Peter is not going to just walk through him like he did these other guys."

Early in Klitschko's camp, Steward says the goal is to get his man re-accustomed to the roughness of the sport. "Wladimir is already in pretty good shape. He's always in shape. He's an athlete. He comes in weighing exactly what he'll weigh for the fight, so there's no need for him to detoxify or cut weight. Early on, the focus is just to get back in the ring and work on

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timing, get the feeling back of another human being throwing punches at you. Get the body-to-body contact you can't get from punching bags and doing exercises."

Steward maintains that much of the Peter mystique has been cleverly crafted by his handlers and their careful matchmaking. "Peter's going to find out that this is not the place for him. Wladimir is not another class-C guy. He was fighting the B-level boys, the Charles Shuffords and Jovo Pudars and he struggled with them. So then, they brought back the class-C level guys again for him to walk through. The perception of this fight is that it's a rough, tough, hard-punching guy going against the most fragile, no-chin, and no-confidence fighter in the heavyweight division. In the public's mind, it's the meanest and the toughest guy against the most timid and fragile guy and Peter wins by KO ... But don't forget, Klitschko can punch also. To be hit by a 250-lb man who knows what he's doing will be a new experience for Peter."

Steward says that he and Klitschko are planning on changing people's perceptions of the big Ukrainian with this performance. "If I had any doubts about Wladimir's confidence, I would not be here. Wladimir has never doubted himself. He's the most confident fighter I've ever dealt with. Right now, the only people who don't doubt him are me and him, but he's never even thought about losing. I think this fight will be over after round two. After two rounds of eating the kinds of punches Wladimir will hit him with, he won't want to fight anymore. It will be a strong kid against an experienced man in a higher class than he's ever been in with."

When told of Steward's remarks, Sam Peter's trainer laughed. "Is that what he said? Emanuel is going to find out that the better the fighter, the better it is for Samuel. Samuel really thrives on challenges. He'll rise to the occasion. I hope this guy Klitschko is at his best because when Sam knocks him out. I don't want to hear excuses about 'somebody put salve on his legs,' and things like that. I hope Klitschko comes ready, no excuses."