

Giacobbe Fragomeni, Italian Cruiserweight Sensation

Written by Luca De Franco
Monday, 12 December 2005 19:00

Giacobbe Fragomeni is one the most promising newcomers on the Italian boxing scene. He is 36 years old and started fighting professionally only four years ago, but in an era where fighters in their 40s can still win world titles and defend it many times you cannot count Fragomeni out – especially because he had an outstanding amateur career, becoming European champion and winning the bronze medal at the 1997 world championships in the heavyweight division. He faced, among others, DaVarryl Williamson.

That was in Milan, more than five years ago. I was ringside and can guarantee you it was a very boring fight. Williamson had won the U.S. title three consecutive times (1996-97-98), so everybody was expecting a spectacular battle between top rated amateurs. Maybe that was the problem; the two guys knew each other's reputation and kept on the waiting stance to avoid trouble. They were successful in that. The judges called it a draw. Isn't that reminiscent of Williamson vs. Chris Byrd?

Anyway, Fragomeni's pro career took a step forward on November 13, 2004, when he beat by majority decision Frederic Serrat (who was 23-3) for the vacant WBC international cruiserweight championship. He defended it on March 12 against Daniel Bispo (15-0) and won a unanimous decision. That was an entertaining fight, with Fragomeni showing his full repertoire and proving he has the stamina to keep the rhythm going for the entire length of a title bout. He didn't knock Bispo out, so you may wonder if the Italian has real punching power. His record (18-0 with just 7 KOs) says no, but against Bispo the story was different: Fragomeni hit really hard with combinations to the face and the body and looked on the verge of a KO win, but he found out (like everybody else) that the Brazilian was a legitimate tough guy.

On December 16, in Milan, Giacobbe Fragomeni will face journeyman Zoltan Beres (27-27-2) in a six round contest. The event will be promoted by Salvatore Cherchi at the famed Palalido. We met Giacobbe Fragomeni during a break from his training and asked him about his future as a prizefighter.

Assuming that you will win easily on December 16, what will be the next step of your career?

I never assume anything like that. I respect all my opponents. Besides, I need to go the distance to keep improving. So, even with an easy opponent it's likely that I won't win by KO. My next step should be a fight against WBO cruiserweight champion Johnny Nelson. I was talking about it with my manager, Salvatore Cherchi. I think Nelson is a good opponent for me. I can beat him.

What about his fight against Vincenzo Cantatore?

Nelson won clearly, every round but the 9th 10th and 11th. That's Vincenzo's fault, he should have attacked him from the first stanza and kept the pressure on him. When Cantatore followed

Giacobbe Fragomeni, Italian Cruiserweight Sensation

Written by Luca De Franco

Monday, 12 December 2005 19:00

that strategy, Nelson was in trouble. When the British fighter received a good shot to the face, he was groggy. Another good punch would have been enough to KO him. If I get my chance against Johnny Nelson, I will be the aggressor for the entire fight. I won't give him the time to breathe, not even for one second. Also because he is very sure of his capabilities, if you let him box his own way his self-confidence keeps rising and he will try to knock you out.

What about the WBA/WBC cruiserweight king Jean-Marc Mormeck?

His style is very close to mine. We would make an exciting fight. I'm ready to fight him, just like I'm ready for anybody else.

After Mormeck easily defeated a power-puncher like Wayne Braithwaite, many fighters don't want to face him.

Then they should change profession. Real champions, both pro and amateurs, never turn down a challenge.

Talking about your amateur career, your fight with DaVarryl Williamson was disappointing. Why?

We were preparing for the Olympic trials and didn't want to risk anything. That's why the match was boring. I saw Williamson in action many times, before fighting him, and I knew he had punching power. I also knew he had a suspect chin. He proved it during the 1998 Goodwill Games final in New York City. I wasn't there, but I saw the tape: Williamson attacked Savon with combinations and the Cuban did nothing. When Williamson opened his guard, the Cuban legend knocked him out with a right hand to the chin: 1st round KO. Williamson tried to get up, but didn't have strength in his legs and fell back to the mat. Impressive! I wasn't surprised by the outcome because I saw Felix Savon in action many times and I knew he was a unique champion, a true legend of amateur boxing. He beat me in the world championship semi-final, but I'm not ashamed of it. Anyway, I'm proud of my amateur career: I was a member of the Italian national team from 1993 to 2001. I fought the very best all over the world and became European champion beating an outstanding boxer like Sergei Dychkov in the final. I also participated to a trip to Cuba, with the national team; we trained in the same gyms as the Cuban champions and we discovered that they had a 50 years old ring and very old equipment. That's also to prove that to be successful in boxing, you just need the talent and the will to train every day. No fancy equipment can help you in your rise to the top.

Would you fight DaVarryl Williamson today?

If he can go down to the cruiserweight limit; otherwise no. I competed among heavyweights as an amateur, but for my professional career the best thing is to go after the cruiserweight title.

Giacobbe Fragomeni

Born in Milan, Italy

Giacobbe Fragomeni, Italian Cruiserweight Sensation

Written by Luca De Franco

Monday, 12 December 2005 19:00

Division: Cruiserweight

Age: 36

Born: 1969-08-13

Stance: Orthodox

Height: 177 cm

Record: 18 wins (7 KOs) in 18 fights

Title: WBC international champion