

## Boxing News: Lamon Brewster Defends Crown vs. Sergei Liakhovich

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A heavyweight world championship will be decided for the first time in the greater Cleveland area since 1983, when World Boxing Organization heavyweight champ "Relentless" Lamon Brewster makes the fourth defense of his crown opposing once-beaten Sergei "White Wolf" Liakhovich at Wolstein Center at Cleveland State University on April 1. The fight is being promoted by Don King Productions and will be broadcast on Showtime Championship Boxing at 11 p.m. ET/PT

"I'm excited about bringing a heavyweight world championship fight home to Cleveland," said Don King. "Lamon Brewster is a great heavyweight champion and it is an opportunity for the fans around the country to see the best of the heavyweights on Showtime."

"I want to be universally known as THE world champion, not a United States or regional champion or somebody who just fights in his backyard," Brewster said. "That means fighting anybody, anywhere. Boxing is not a beauty contest. It is not the Olympics where you get points for style and grace. It is all about winning, and all I do is win."

Brewster (33-2, 29 KOs), originally from Indianapolis but now living in LA, rallied to score a dramatic fifth-round TKO over Wladimir Klitschko to capture the WBO crown in 2004 and has been victorious in his last nine starts (including eight by knockout), three of them successful defenses of the heavyweight title.

To illustrate his willingness to compete anywhere, the 2005 WBO Fighter of the Year traveled to Hamburg, Germany for his last outing to defend against local favorite Luan Krasniqi. The bout drew more than 10,000 fans on the 100th anniversary of German heavyweight Max Schmeling's birthday on Sept. 28. In a thrilling give-and-take battle, Brewster exited with a hard-fought ninth-round technical knockout.

"I should get credit for two knockouts because I knocked him out twice," said Brewster, who turned the fight around when he landed a hellacious left hook with 30 seconds left in the eighth that crumpled Krasniqi against the ropes. The match nearly ended there but the ref dawdled over the count, which allowed Krasniqi to get to his feet just before the bell sounded. Television replays estimated the count to be between 13 and 17 seconds.

Willingly being outboxed for much of the fight while waiting to land a knockout punch, a nearly exhausted Brewster ended matters when he floored the determined challenger with 12 seconds left in the ninth round. This time, the referee quickly waved the fight off, not even bothering to count.

"It was just my willpower and my determination," said Brewster, who has won 83 percent of his starts by knockout. "Luan was a good fighter. He landed many good shots. But I proved by going to Germany and defeating a game challenger that I am a world champion."

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“I always fight from will, not always from skill.”

Just prior to the Krasniqi knockout win, Brewster successfully defended his title with a devastating 53-second, first-round knockout over Andrew Golota on May 21, 2005. The fight was in Chicago, but it might as well have been in Poland. There were more than 20,000 in attendance, almost all rooting for the Polish-born Golota.

Aside from the ovation they afforded Golota during introductions, Brewster gave them nothing else to cheer about. Ten seconds after the opening bell, Brewster dropped Golota with a sensational left hook. The challenger made it to his feet, but was knocked down again from another crunching left hook. A third left hook finished Golota and ended one of the quickest – and most stunning – heavyweight title fights in history.

“They cannot see me,” said Brewster after registering the 13th opening-round knockout of his career. “When God is with you, they cannot take it away. If we cannot work and make it, we can still take it. Golota was the only thing keeping me from the land of milk and honey. I was an F-16 and he was a B-52 bomber and I shot him down.

“I am not saying I am great, but there was Lennox Lewis and before that Evander Holyfield and before that Mike Tyson. Now there is me. I need to stand up and be a great champion. I am here to stay.”

Liakhovich, of Scottsdale, Ariz., by way of Minsk, Byelorrussia, has won six in a row, including a unanimous 10-round decision over Dominick Guinn in his last start on Dec. 3, 2004. A boxer-puncher with excellent overall talent and skills, Liakhovich outpointed the then-highly regarded Guinn by the scores of 97-93 and 96-94 twice.

Now, he gets Brewster in his first world-title appearance.

“This is exactly the kind of big fight that I have always wanted,” said Liakhovich, who compiled an excellent record of 145-14 in the amateurs and represented Russia in the 1996 Olympic Games. “The heavyweight division is wide open. All I have ever been looking for is a chance to show my skills and talent.

“I am not worried about being ring rusty. I am sharp. I stay in shape.”

Liakhovich is fully recovered from an injury that forced him to withdraw from a fight with Owen Beck in September 2005 on SHOWTIME. “I suffered a bruised cartilage,” he said, “but I am fine now and will definitely be 110 percent for Brewster. This is the opportunity of a lifetime. I will be ready. I am supremely confident.”

A patient boxer-puncher with excellent movement and good overall talent and skills, Liakhovich is not easily discouraged, and seems to wake up when he is hit. He likes to shoot combinations from all angles but may be at his best when he can press forward and work the inside. He surprised some onlookers, however, in his match against Guinn by effectively moving off his combinations and exhibiting nimble footwork, particularly for a big man. At 6-feet-4, he

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possesses a significant height advantage over the defending champion.

“This is going to be a great fight for me, not for Brewster,” Liakhovich said. “Brewster is making a big mistake if he thinks this is going to be an easy fight. If it is an easy fight for anybody, it will be me.”

The most recent world heavyweight championship bout in the Cleveland area took place on September 23, 1983 in Richfield, OH. WBA Champion Michael "Dynamite" Dokes was upset by South Africa's Gerrie Coetzee by KO 10 of a scheduled 15-round bout. Prior to that, at the same Richfield Coliseum, Muhammad Ali scored a 15 round TKO over a game Chuck Wepner for the WBA & WBC heavyweight titles on March 24, 1975. Both fight cards were promoted by Don King.

For more information on Brewster vs. Liakhovich, SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING and “ShoBox: The New Generation,” visit [www.sho.com/boxing](http://www.sho.com/boxing).