Tomorrow afternoon from Mannheim, Germany, via HBO, Chris Byrd defends his IBF heavyweight title against challenger Wladimir Klitschko. The two men met in 2000 and Klitschko took the decision, and while six years in boxing is a lifetime in any other endeavor, it's possible that Wlad will do it again and emerge the new champ. The variables are many. On the positive side is Byrd's speed and ring savvy vs. Klitschko's world-class jab. The negatives are Byrd's age vs. K's chin. This is how The Sweet Science writers see Byrd vs. Klitschko.

Why should this be any different than the first? Klitschko's major issue, a weak chin, won't be a factor in this one because Byrd can't punch through a spider web. Klitschko appears to have all of his skills intact, and his size is simply too much for a natural middleweight like Byrd to overcome. Klitschko by unanimous decision. Then Byrd and John Ruiz can vie for the vacant M.U.H. ("Most Unwatchable Heavyweight.") championship of the world.
Matthew Aguilar

Boxing may be 75% mental, but the physical counts too. Wladimir Klitschko has six inches in height, seven in reach and thirty pounds on the smaller Byrd. He will use his size advantage, and an effective jab, to win rounds. The psychological damage suffered by Klitschko in his knockout losses to Corrie Sanders and Lamon Brewster was on display in his most recent outing against Samuel Peter, as he stumbled to the canvas twice in the fifth round as much out of fear as from the power of Peter's punch. But when Peter stopped punching and allowed Klitschko back into the fight, he also allowed him to redeem a level of psychological stability. Klitschko enters his fight with Byrd mentally stronger and with less to fear. Chris Byrd, a skilled southpaw, does not have the power to damage Klitschko either physically or mentally. Though Byrd has successfully defended his title four times, his win over Fres Oquendo, draw with Andrew Golota and split decision over Jameel McCline all could have gone the challenger's way. This time, on German soil, he won't find such friendly judges. The rematch will end like the first fight, with Klitschko taking Byrd's championship belt by decision.
David Berlin

Byrd is a better fighter than he was five years ago. But so is Klitschko. He proved that in his recent win over Sam Peter. He showed poise and patience. Emanuel Steward has taught him a lot. I can't see this ending any differently then the first fight. If Byrd tries to mix it up, he could be in trouble. Klitschko by decision.
Rick Folstad

Byrd is going to get hammered in Wlad's backyard. He's no match with his cardio routine and his annoying jab. He can run but he can't hide all night from Dr. Steel Hammer's jab, strength and desire to take the title from this slaphappy heavyweight.
Amy Green

Byrd KO7 Klitschko. This is the answer to what happens when the resistible force meets the moveable object.

Michael Katz

Even though their first fight was almost six years ago, their careers taking very different courses, some things tend to remain the same. No doubt, Klitschko's trainer Manny Steward will have gone over the tapes of Byrd's last outings and reviewed the 2000 tape of Klitschko-Byrd I which adds up to Steward insisting on Wlad working overtime on his jab. And the Klitschko jab is the key, with Byrd hoping to work inside and throw quick combinations from close range, stationing himself inside the arch of Klitschko's power. Look for the jab to rule in this one and like their first fight, Byrd's inability to hit with authority means Klitschko should have his way.

Patrick Kehoe

Byrd has struggled against his last four opponents, none of them world-beaters, and when he and Wladimir first fought Chris lost 10, 11, and 12 rounds on the judges' cards. The result, then, should be a foregone conclusion, but that analysis doesn't take into account the indomitable spirit of the Brothers Klitschko. Contrary to conventional analysis, Byrd probably can't win even by outboxing Wladimir, but he could win if his opponent quits because of an injury, either real or imagined. Byrd retains his title on a late-round booboo.

George Kimball

Too many uncertainties about this fight make it one that you surely shouldn't bet on, but in the ring of predictions anything makes sense. A compelling argement could be made for Byrd by Decision, Byrd by KO, Draw, Wlad by Decision or Wlad by KO. I don't have a feel here at all because we don't know which Byrd will show up or which Klitschko will be there. Wlad still has serious stamina questions that need to be addressed as well as his ability to take a shot . . . or not. Byrd has slowed down recently and has traded more than in the past, and age is not on his side, nor are the fans. From a betting perspective the only way to play could be a bet on Byrd, but only because you get back +250 in what is a tough fight to call. I'm not betting but I will be watching and a Byrd victory or Draw would be no surprise.

Joey Knish

Chris Byrd has only one knockout in six years and eleven fights, thus it would seem logical unless Klitschko ends the fight or Byrd gets lucky, the bout will go the full twelve rounds. If the fight does go the distance, you've got to go with Klitschko as the fight is in Germany. He may very well KO the increasingly flat-footed Byrd, but in that case, the hometown decision is irrelevant. Klitschko is also five years younger than Byrd. The style of Byrd lends itself to constant movement, whether it is movement of the head, foot or hands, and Klitschko will wear down the smaller, older Byrd, eventually landing a barrage of punches with Byrd along the ropes, forcing the referee to stop the contest in round nine.

Scott Mallon

Klitschko beat him once handily, so there is no reason to think he won't do it again. Klitschko W 12.

Bob Mladinich

While Byrd is the better boxer, he doesn't have the power to unsettle Klitschko. If the champion remains focused for the entire fight he can win it on points, but if he lets his guard down

momentarily Klitschko will stop him. Klitschko is the kind of boxer who goes into a fight with a gameplan and Byrd is going to have to step up on this one.
Deon Potgieter

Klitschko is bigger, stronger, and a more talented fighter than Byrd. The only question is whether or not he can deal with Byrd's craftiness, which can bother anyone. We know what happened the first time and the only difference in this one is that Byrd's been champ for it seems like forever. I think his luck runs out over in Germany and Klitschko shows that he's deserving of being heavyweight champion. Klitschko by KO.
Benn Schulberg

Wladimir Klitschko’s weak chin has been exposed since their first fight, but Chris Byrd’s punches are still not powerful enough to do the necessary damage. While this fight has a higher level of anticipation, the outcome will be very similar to the first. Klitschko by unanimous decision.
Aaron Tallent

Sam Peter put Wlad into a precarious state several times but didn't finish the job. Chris Byrd is certainly no finisher. He has lost several steps over the last couple of years and seemingly his motivation has diminished to the point where it looks like he's just about done with this sport. Wlad has the reach and an edge in desire, resulting in a UD12, Klitschko.
Michael Woods

Photos this week from Germany made it hard to forget how much bigger Klitschko looked last time as he knocked Byrd around. It remains Klitschko's best performance, but he has not proven able to duplicate it since. By my observation Byrd has at least maintained his previous overall skills, adding some strength, while Klitschko seems less intense. May the best man win in a meeting of worthy gentlemen. Percentages favor Klitschko, around 70 per cent by random ratios, but I'm going with Byrd because he's my compatriot and his optimism was contagious.
Phil Woolever