

## Giddy Shannon Briggs

Written by Rick Folstad  
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There were moments Wednesday when Shannon Briggs sounded almost giddy, like a kid on his eighth birthday who just found a pony tied to a tree in his backyard.

Talking about his Nov. 4 heavyweight title fight against WBO champ Sergei Liakhovich (23-1, 14 KOs) at Chase Field in Phoenix (SHOWTIME), Briggs (47-4-1, 41 KOs) said on a conference call that he was, well, pretty darn excited about his opportunity to bring a dying division back to the land of the living.

“I’m chillin’,” he said, sharing the conference call with Liakhovich. “I’m so happy, I can’t wait to fight. I’m looking forward to being the WBO heavyweight champion of the world on Nov. 5. I’m looking forward to going on all the shows – Letterman, Leno. Just making it happen. I want to bring some prestige and some life back to boxing. With these dead champions we’ve got right now, we need it, man.”

Giddy.

Of course, the heavyweight division isn’t the only thing Briggs wants to resuscitate. His boxing career could use a little CPR. It’s had its dead time. But that’s because Briggs said he thought he could slip by on talent alone. The hell with roadwork and sparring. He was Shannon “Kiss My Ass” Briggs.

He should have known better.

“I just took fights and never learned how to train,” he says. “I never did any of this stuff (running, sparring, preparing) before.”

This stuff? It’s called getting in shape.

But he claims he’s changed, that the old Shannon Briggs has been kicked out of the house and the new Briggs has moved in and found things comfortable. He runs now, and actually spars. And he’s won his last 11 fights.

So now Briggs is ready to take his rightful place among world champions. Don’t think so? Just ask him.

“This is [my] destiny,” he said. “It’s how it’s supposed to be. It’s got nothing to do with [Liakhovich]. This is beyond him. He’s just a small piece of the equation. He’s nothing. I’m just looking forward to fulfilling my prophecy (to be undisputed champion). It’s all good. I’m having a good time with this. I couldn’t be more happy.”

Briggs said he plans to give the people what they want: blood.

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“They want to see his head decapitated, so that’s what I’m coming for,” he said. “I’m looking forward to it.”

Not the decapitating. Not really.

What Briggs is doing is looking at the bigger picture without forgetting about taking care of the little things, like beating a tough Liakhovich.

He’s looking at this fight as an opportunity to begin cleaning up the division, do a little mopping, change the names at the top to something easier to pronounce.

Something like Briggs.

“Shannon Briggs as the heavyweight champion of the world is a beautiful thing,” he said, maybe rushing things a little. “It can definitely bring a lot of people back to the sport. I’m ugly, but I’m funny. That’s my motto.”

Briggs is right when he says people don’t know who the heavyweight champs are.

They don’t know who Liakhovich is or Nikolay Valuev, or Oleg Maskaev or even Wladimir Klitschko. And he’s probably right when he says people don’t care. At least they don’t seem to care in this country.

“These guys aren’t personable. These guys are not marketable,” he said. “They’re ugly, they get on my nerves. I’m tired of them. Everyone wants to see a champion they can identify with. And that’s what I’m here to do. It’s time to clean up this mess.”

Liakhovich has his own plans for Nov. 4. He said if Briggs jumps on him early, it will be a short night for Briggs.

“I know he’s going to come swinging, throw a lot of hard shots,” Liakhovich said. “But he needs to think about it that every time he swings, he’s going to get hit.

“I will have for him many surprises. He talks like he’s going to knock me out. Bring it on. We’ll see.”

Toward the end of the call, voices were raised when Briggs cut in on Liakhovich, who was answering a question.

“I will take your ugly head off,” Liakhovich finally snapped.

“I’ll see you soon,” Briggs said, laughing. “I can’t wait.”

Giddy.