Written by Robert Mladinich
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The VERSUS network, which has lofty plans of becoming a premier boxing network, has already showcased undefeated middleweight Kelly Pavlik on two occasions. There is no question that the hard-punching Pavlik, 29-0 (26 KOS), of Youngstown, Ohio, has superstar potential.

As a lead-in to Pavlik’s November 2 fourth round stoppage of Lenord Pierre at the Chevrolet Centre in Pavlik’s hometown, VERSUS showcased another bright young prospect who also exudes superstar appeal.

Super middleweight Donovan “Don Da Bom” George of Chicago raised his record to 10-0-1 (8 KOS) by blasting out the well-traveled veteran Julio Jean, now 7-10-1 (3 KOS), of New Haven, Connecticut, via Haiti, in the fifth round.

The hard-punching 22-year-old George put the boxing world on notice that he is a force to be reckoned with.

“Fighting in Youngstown was phenomenal,” said George, who has engaged in most of his bouts within the friendly confines of the Windy City. “The crowd was great. I fought a durable guy who kept moving forward. The fans went nuts when I knocked him down.”

George, who is of Greek and Irish extraction, is a man on a mission. He was introduced to the sweet science at the age of four by his father Peter, a police officer in Lincolnwood, Illinois.

Unlike his two brothers, one of whom is a former Golden Gloves boxer but is now a football player at North Park University in Chicago, George was immediately enthralled by the sport.

“My brother hung up the gloves for the spikes,” said George. “But I fell in love with boxing. It’s what I’ve been doing for almost my whole life. Right now, it is my life and I’m enjoying it more than ever before.”

George, who is still trained by his father, is managed by the New Jersey-based Cestus Management, which also handles junior welterweight sensation “Mighty” Mike Arnaoutis.

Manager Mike Michael, who was introduced to George by a Greek journalist in Chicago, realized right away that the youngster, a three-time Golden Gloves champion, had championship potential.

“I was very excited, he’s the real deal,” said Michael. “We put a team together and are really rolling with him now. He has great talent and a lot of confidence, and I have a profound belief that he can win a world title.”

Michael adds that what makes George even more bankable and promotable is the fact that he

looks like a European version of Oscar De La Hoya.

“The camera loves the kid, and he loves the camera,” said Michael. “Plus he can fight. He is the whole package.”

George doesn’t mind the facial comparisons to De La Hoya, but adds that he’d rather be compared to the Golden Boy in terms of also becoming a franchise unto himself someday.

He realizes all of the sacrifices associated with ring success, and is more than willing to do what it takes to reach his goals.

Besides De La Hoya, he also admires super middleweight champion Joe Calzaghe and realizes that neither got to the summit by happenstance.

“Joe is a great fighter, an amazing fighter,” said George. “He’s one of my favorite fighters. By the time I get to the top, he’ll probably be gone. But he, like De La Hoya, is a good role model for me.”

Growing up, George said there was always a classic fight in the VCR. He is a huge fan of the two Sugar Rays – Robinson and Leonard – as well as the pugilistic talent of Floyd Mayweather.

He considers himself a student of the game, and says he has learned from everyone he has sparred with or watched live or on television.

Even at his relatively young age, George is mature enough to know he must take baby steps to a world title. Although he has a healthy ego when talking about himself, he refuses to speak the least bit disrespectfully of any past or potentially future opponents.

“My plan is to become a world champ, and then a movie star,” said George, who regularly spars at the Windy City Gym and does conditioning work at Chicago’s Brooks Park Gym, which is closer to his home.

“In the next year or so, I want to get as many fights as I can. I want to fight as often as possible, in as many places as possible. It is important for me to get as much experience as possible, under all different circumstances.

“I want to stay unbeaten, pick up some (regional) belts, and get a ranking,” he adds. “I love the pressure of fighting on TV. I love having all eyes on me. Hearing the crowd and seeing the cameras is like recharging my battery.”

Michael says that he is angling for regular television spots on VERSUS, as well as ShoBox: The New Generation and ESPN2. He believes that once the masses get a look at Da Bomb, a new star will be born.

“I can’t help but have a real heavy belief in Don as a fighter and as a human being,” said Michael. “He’s a good kid in a great stable of fighters. The sky is the limit for him.”

For more information on George and Cestus Management, log onto www.cestusmanagement.com .