

Prospecting Hot Prospects On ShoBox

Written by Robert Mladinich
Wednesday, 07 February 2007 19:00

The whole concept of Showtime's ShoBox: The New Generation series is to showcase two prospects with as much to lose as they have to gain. The program has certainly succeeded on that front and numerous ShoBox performers have already graduated to superstar status.

One of the best ShoBox matches in years takes place on Friday, February 16, when Mike Oliver, 17-0 (7 KOS), of Hartford, Connecticut, squares off against Staten Island, New York's Gary Stark Jr., 18-0 (8 KOS), at the Buffalo Run Casino in Oklahoma. At stake is the USBA junior featherweight title.

The opening eight-rounder on the Lou DiBella promoted show is another fine scrap between junior middleweights Derek Ennis, 10-0-1 (7 KOS), of Philadelphia, against Allen Conyers, 10-2 (8 KOS), of New York.

Conyers was originally scheduled to fight on a Long Island club show that evening, but his promoter, Bob Duffy of Ring Promotions, encouraged him to take the higher profile fight on ShoBox.

Duffy, the former director of boxing for the New York Athletic Commission and the top grassroots promoter in the New York metropolitan area, was thrilled that Conyers was given the opportunity to display his talents to an international viewing audience.

The meeting between Oliver and Stark should be a barnburner. Both are fast and aggressive with impeccable amateur credentials. Although the 27-year-old Oliver had over 300 amateur fights and was one of the most talked about amateurs in New England history, Stark is nonplussed.

Within just a few years of lacing on the gloves for the first time, Stark was fighting and winning in national and international competition.

Oliver's trainer, former light heavyweight title challenger John "Iceman" Scully, said he admires Stark for taking the fight but feels he will go home a loser.

The cocky, confident and perpetually happy Stark, as well as his father and trainer, Gary Sr., see things differently.

"This is what I've been waiting for," said the 26-year-old Stark Jr. "This is what I've wanted all along. I want to fight the best available fighters right now. I welcome this challenge and all of the other challenges that will come after I beat Oliver."

Too bad there are not more prospects that have enough faith in their abilities to follow similar paths set forth by Oliver, Stark and their management.

Prospecting Hot Prospects On ShoBox

Written by Robert Mladinich

Wednesday, 07 February 2007 19:00

More times than not, the fighters will agree to fight anyone. Managers, on the other hand, often have a lot less faith in their fighters than they should.

Whoever wins the battle between Stark and Oliver will rapidly ascend to the echelons of the division. Both have the skills and personality to become Showtime or HBO stars.

"This what boxing is all about," said DiBella. "No easy fights. Two guys at the same stage of their careers fighting to see who takes the first step up. You gotta love it."

There are several other East Coast fighters who are on the cusp of facing serious tests.

Peter Quillin is a hard-punching middleweight, who is best known by the name of Kid Chocolate for two reasons. One of his favorite fighters has always been the original Kid Chocolate, who, like him, hailed from Cuba. The current Kid also loves to throw chocolate candies into the crowds after each win.

With a record of 8-0 (7 KOS), he is relentless and explosive. All of his bouts have taken place in New York, where he has cultivated a loyal following. He is trained by Colin Morgan, who usually has enough confidence in his fighters to put them in competitive bouts.

The extremely intelligent Quillin is also a devout animal lover who hopes to someday become a zoologist or a veterinarian. When he's not training, which is rare, he is visiting the Bronx Zoo or caring for his house pets, which include a cat, an African grey parrot, a python snake, and a long-nosed leopard lizard named Superman.

He also loves children. Besides teaching boxing to kids, he founded the Kid Chocolate Foundation to help youngsters who are less fortunate than he is. But don't let the nice guy persona fool you. Quillin is an animal in the ring. He is lightning quick, extremely powerful, and more than ready to showcase his skills on a premier boxing network.

Another youngster ready to break loose is featherweight Matt "Sharp Shooter" Remillard of Manchester, Connecticut. Calling the 20-year-old year old all action all the time does not even begin to tell the story of his aggression. He fights as if he is on double and triple duty every minute of every round in the ring.

The once troubled teenager found redemption through boxing, so he believes that the sport is his one and only shot at a good life. With a record of 11-0 (7 KOS), it does not look like he will be losing anytime soon.

He is a good enough prospect for manager Jackie Kallen to have signed up without hesitation. She fell in love with the intensity and tenacity that he brings to the game. Remillard resembles a more disciplined, but no less vicious version of Johnny Tapia and has already sparred with Manny Pacquiao in Los Angeles. Even in a division that is comprised of mostly Hispanic and Asian fighters, Remillard is about to burst on the scene with the explosive energy of a runaway train.