

Has Olszewski Bitten More Than She Can Chew?

Written by Robert Mladinich
Thursday, 23 August 2007 19:00

Undefeated Eileen "The Hawaiian Mongoose" Olszewski, a native of Honolulu who lives and fights out of New York, is scheduled to battle WBC female flyweight champion Stefania Bianchini in Rivigo, Italy, on September 14.

Even with that world title fight looming in her immediate future, Olszewski opted to take on the tough challenge of Suzannah "Destiny" Warner, a native of Leeds, England, who also fights out of the Big Apple, on Friday, August 24, at the gloriously restored Paradise Theater in the Bronx.

The show is being promoted by Joe DeGuardia's Star Boxing.

"I'm not looking past Suzannah, I would never look past anyone," said the thirty-something Olszewski. "Right now I'm staying focused on Friday...and nothing else."

Olszewski, who has had several fights cancelled in recent months, is glad to be fighting two times in such a short span (assuming she beats Warner).

"It's helping getting me fired up," said Olszewski, who attributes her calm and reserved demeanor to her Hawaiian culture. "On the outside I might seem calm but inside I am very excited."

Her manager, David Selwyn, is glad to have such a busy itinerary over the next few weeks. But, he asserted, neither he nor Olszewski is foolish enough to take Warner lightly.

With all the scheduled fights that have fallen out on us, we are glad to be able to fight twice in a few weeks," he said. "It's a busy schedule, but Eileen has been preparing for this moment ever since she began boxing."

Amazingly, Olszewski, a former Knick City Dancer who danced and performed stunt work during New York Knicks basketball games at Madison Square Garden, only began boxing in the late nineties.

Although she trained as a youngster to be a classical dancer, she was immediately bitten by the boxing bug when introduced to the sweet science by her husband Matt, who is an undefeated professional kick boxer with a 26-0 record.

What she loved most about boxing was the fact that she initially found it so difficult to master. Once she did, however, her amateur career took off at a breakneck pace. She won three New York City Golden Gloves titles, a national amateur championship, and was also a finalist at the Pan American Games.

She turned pro in November 2006, and now boasts a 3-0 (0 KOS) record. Even though she is

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relatively inexperienced as a professional, Selwyn says that she is more than ready for Warner, a former NABF atomweight (102 pound) titlist, and Bianchini, who is 16-2 (2 KOS).

“Eileen is one of the most naturally gifted athletes I’ve ever seen,” said Selwyn. “I have a vested interest in saying that, so if you don’t believe me listen to what other people are saying.”

When Olszewski recently fought on the undercard of a John Duddy show in New York, commentators Tony Paige and Dave Bontempo couldn’t contain their superlatives. Paige even compared her to the late, great Willie Pep.

Bontempo said she should change her nickname from the “Hawaiian Mongoose” to “Eileen the Dream.” He added that both men and women could learn from watching her superb ring generalship and compared her glowingly to an “old time” fighter. At one point he said that she looked like she was “gliding” in the ring.

Because Selwyn believes that Olszewski is so talented, he is often wary of showing her films to prospective opponents for fear that they will not accept a fight.

“Too many opponents have bailed out on us,” he asserted. “If people thought she was a walkover, they’d be happy to fight her. Obviously they don’t believe that. Her talent speaks for itself. You’ll never hear Eileen telling you how good she is. She is a very humble person.”

For those reasons alone, Selwyn has high praise for Warner and her manager, Allison Emmert, for accepting this bout. He believes the fight will be competitive, but that Olszewski’s date with destiny in Italy in September will not be lost.

Ironically it is the charismatic and extremely talented Warner, also in her thirties, who has gone by the nickname of “Destiny” for her entire career. A mistake that no one should make is that Warner’s 7-4 (2 KOS) record makes her any less of a solid pro than Olszewski.

For three decades she was a soccer player who tore up her knee in the last ten minutes of a season a few years ago. During her rehabilitative process she took up boxing and has never looked back.

Within months of beginning training in 2003, she competed in the NYC Golden Gloves tournament. She lost that year, but took home the crown a year later. She also went on to emerge victorious in the national tournament.

Seemingly overnight, she turned pro in September 2005 and has learned her craft in tough fights, often on the road.

With her first five fights contested in faraway locales such as Colorado, New Mexico, Idaho and California, she was on the short end of some close decisions. But she never lost her vision or her way.

Believing that winning a world title is her destiny, she adopted her nickname which signifies her

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strength of character and fierce competitiveness and determination.

After she beat well-traveled veteran Yvonne Caples for the NABF title in December 2006, it looked as if the broad smiles that she and Emmert wore on their faces would never go away.

However, two fights later, in February 2007, Warner's destiny was derailed when she lost a unanimous decision to Carina Moreno, now 13-1 (4 KOS), in California. At stake was the interim WBC light flyweight title.

Warner was not deterred by the loss to Moreno. "On paper (the scoring) looked like it was a terribly one-sided fight, but I don't believe it was," said the eternally optimistic and well-grounded Warner. "Of course I would have liked to have won, but I still came away from that fight feeling good about myself."

She said that there were a lot of unfortunate incidents leading up to the fight against Moreno who, like Olszewski, is naturally bigger than Warner. But, she adds, because of the nature of women's boxing, you have to grasp whatever opportunities come your way.

She doesn't blame Olszewski for planning a future fight with Bianchini, but admits that it miffed her a bit that the world title fight was announced before she and Olszewski even entered the ring at a contracted weight to be no greater than 109 pounds.

"I thought it was a little disrespectful, but that won't change my plans at all," said Warner. "I have no idea what to expect from Eileen. I hear that she's a lot like me, that she moves around a lot. She might be bigger than me, but I doubt that she's stronger than me. I've prepared to do my job and feel that I know what the outcome will be. I will win."

The main event of Friday's show pits hot welterweight prospect Delvin Rodriguez, 20-2-1 (12 KOS), a native of the Dominican Republic who fights out of Danbury, Connecticut, against Keenan Collins, 12-2-1 (8 KOS), of Reading, Pennsylvania.

Cruiserweight Alfredo Escalera Jr., 14-0-1 (11 KOS), the son of the former super featherweight champion of the same name, mixes it up with Harvey "Candy Man" Jolley, 6-4-1 (3 KOS), of Detroit. Word is that the 27-year-old Escalera is one to watch.

Undefeated junior middleweight Efrain Joel Torres, 7-0 (4 KOS), takes on fellow Puerto Rican Daniel Sostre, 4-3 (1 KO)

Rounding out the card are fights featuring area favorites, including heavyweight Terrell "Baby Bull" Nelson, 7-4 (5 KOS), of Plainfield, New Jersey; undefeated junior middleweight Ray Robinson, 3-0 (0 KOS), of Philadelphia; and cruiserweight Jon "The Fighting Marine" Schneider, 4-1 (3 KOS) of Yonkers. The crowd-pleasing Schneider fights as if he is on automatic pilot and is fun to watch.

The Paradise Theater is located at 2417 Grand Concourse (near Fordham Road) in the Bronx. Doors open at 6:30 P.M. and the fists start flying at 7:30 P.M. Tickets can be purchased through

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Ticketmaster at 212-307-7171 or by calling Star Boxing at 718-823-6600.