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DUSSELDORF - Let's hold off a bit on the hate here, sweet scientists.

It's understood that John Ruiz isn't the most explosive heavyweight fighter to campaign in the decades that recently transpired over this millennium's calendar change.

Still, though many rounds may offer snoozing evidence Ruiz's style doesn't lead to action-packed, edge of your seat slugfests, it's also pretty much indisputable that over that same time frame Ruiz is one of the most successful 200 plus pounders to put on the gloves.

A lot of solid big men, like Hasim Rahman, Kirk Johnson, Fres Oquendo, Andrew Golota, and Evander Holyfield (they went 1-1-1, Ruiz probably deserved another nod), "shoulda" beat "The Quiet Man".

They didn't.

"It definitely bothers me when all I hear about is holding," says Ruiz, 43-7-1 (29), speaking from his hotel room in Berlin where he awaits a second shot at Nikolay Valuev this Saturday. "I didn't get to be a two time world champion by just standing there. It does get me angry, especially after my fight with Jameel McCline. He was the one hanging on, but people said it was my fault. I couldn't believe it."

So much so that team Ruiz decided, with a nod toward wise guy public relations tactics, to offer a wager to condescending columnists. Ruiz issued a press release saying he was willing to bet reporters he wouldn't be the one initiating any waltzes this weekend, and that whoever came out on the losing end of what might be called a "hold stat" had to donate to chosen good causes.

"I'm always the one who gets criticized, but nobody has stepped up to the plate so far," said Ruiz. "We're hoping to give some money to charity anyway."

While many observers felt Ruiz deserved the decision against Valuev the initial time around, he's not hung up on looking back regarding the rematch.

"In the first fight I threw a ton of punches," said Ruiz. "When the bell rang for the twelfth I wasn't tired at all and thought it was an easy fight. Then I heard the scores and everything went south. What else could I do? Some things you got to take and just keep going."

"My people are telling me I'll have to do twice as much as him to get a decision," continued Ruiz. "The plan this time is just to keep throwing a lot of punches, and I hope this time I get the win. Valuev's a very tall guy. I'm basically expecting him to try a typical European style. Stand straight up and throw a lot of jabs."

"Everybody's saying how much he's improved his style with a new trainer. Well, I've been working with a new trainer too, Manny Siacca. If Valuev's (really) improved, it's only going to make me better. My training went great. I trained in Las Vegas first, now I'm finishing up here."

"I'm always excited to come to Germany, even though the judging went against me. I love the people, they're great to me, and I love Berlin. This is my third time in Germany fighting, and hopefully, like the saying goes, it will be the charm."

"This fight is the main thing on my mind, I have to win Saturday before anything else. But my dream is still to unify the heavyweight title. I know it's not going to be easy."

There's an old saying in boxing that goes something like "win tonight, look good next time." Many howl that Ruiz has never looked good, but he's won plenty and earned some big next times.

"Instead of looking at the positive side, a lot of people always take the negative side," reflected Ruiz. "I guess that's more appealing. I'm not tall or built like the Klitschkos, (but) there's got to be a reason I beat a lot of good fighters. I should be more of an inspiration to normal looking guys fighting taller guys that look stronger."

Ruiz is probably willing to meet both the Klitschkos at once, and if he ends up as David Haye's first rated heavyweight opponent, it's a terrible risk-reward proposition for the Englishman.

There's another old saying : it takes two to tango. Both Ruiz and Valuev promise to up the ante this weekend.

Is Ruiz likely to make it into the Hall of Fame? No.

Could he hang tough or win versus some men near his size who did? Like it or not, the answer is probably yes.

Now, before the screaming starts, let's wait until Valuev-Ruiz II is over. Just because I happen to like Ruiz (and Valuev for that matter) from my limited contact a half dozen times or so doesn't mean I won't accurately report if the fight's a boring hugathon, and the crowd's reaction.

If the bout is a stinker, let 'er rip, blog bombers. But let's hold off until Saturday night's results are in from Berlin.

When asked if he had any response to his critics, Ruiz didn't deny that the insults sting, but said he has no hard feelings or negative wishes.

"The audience can say what they want, they're the most important part of boxing to me. I definitely want to say thanks to all my fans who stuck with me. It's been like a roller coaster for all of us. Thank you with all my heart. I'll do my best to win Saturday night, then we can all celebrate."