

Vic Darchinyan, Subtle As A Sledgehammer

Written by Ron Borges
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Vic Darchinyan is not prone to understatement.

The four-time world champion in two weight classes makes it a habit to make his position known and when it comes to an opponent he's about to face, his position is always the same.

To put it bluntly, as Darchinyan always does, his opponent's position will sooner or later be either prone or supine. Unless, of course, he quits on his stool in which case it would be sitting.

This has not changed this week, the final one before he moves up to bantamweight to challenge IBF champion Joseph "King Kong" Agbeko at the BankAtlantic Center in Sunrise, Fla. To the prickly Darchinyan, Agbeko's 26-1 record, his 22 knockouts and his well known power mean nothing.

The only thing that means something is that by midnight he intends to have won another world championship in a third weight class and done it the way he usually has in the past – concussively and convincingly.

"I think after this fight they are going to change my opponent's name to Joseph "Chimpanzee" Agbeko," the unified super flyweight champion said of the man he intends to not only challenge but destroy Saturday night.

"This is going to be the biggest mismatch. Where would you like me to hurt you most? In the body or in the face?"

Any room for misinterpretation?

Darchinyan has always been about as subtle as a sledge hammer. His approach to public relations is the same as his approach to his job – he's most often spoiling for a fight.

Agbeko insists he intends to give him one and perhaps he will but Darchinyan has been so dominating in his last two outings – a stunning 9th round stoppage of Cristian Mijares to unify the super flyweight titles followed by a lop-sided beating of tough Jorge Arce, who was forced to retire in his corner because of cuts and the cumulative effect of a savage 10-round beating – that it is difficult to see anyone in his weight class beating him.

Although it has taken longer than it should, Darchinyan has begun to surface in some of the mythical pound-for-pound ratings and has done enough that his promoter believes he is now handling the kind of fighter who comes along rarely. The kind of fighter about whom history is written by his own hand.

"I believe I represent probably a fighter who will go down as one of the greatest boxers to ever fight in the lower weights in the history of boxing," Gary Shaw said. "Please tell all the poachers

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out there that Vic and I are bound together for life. I want everyone who's on this call to hear that."

In other words, Shaw knows what he's got and what he's got, he believes, is the kind of special talent you do not lose without a fight. Darchinyan feels the same way about the three super flyweight belts (WBC, WBA, IBF) he presently holds and the IBF bantamweight one he assumes he'll be wearing by midnight Saturday.

Darchinyan is so self-confident it is often off putting but the reasons behind it are his very strongly held conviction that he can box better than Joseph Agbeko can box and he can bang better than anyone can bang. Put those together inside one little man and what's to be modest about?

"I always go for the knockout," Darchinyan (32-1, 26 KO) admits. "Decisions in boxing are boring. So I will knock him out. I keep my promises."

Certainly he did against Mijares, who many felt was not only the best super flyweight in the world but one of the 10 best fighters pound-for-pound anywhere until Darchinyan embarrassed him with a one-sided display not only of his vaunted power but also of surprising boxing skill.

When he followed that up by administering an equally one-sided boxing lesson to Arce it was difficult for anyone to argue anymore that he wasn't considerably more than the wild-swinging slugger with a street thug's mentality and a brutish rudimentary style he had been portrayed to be.

He had become a boxer who can punch and a puncher who can box. That is the rarest of fighters and the most dangerous. Darchinyan, to be fair, will never be mistaken for Willie Pep but he has become a better boxer than anyone thought possible and when that stylistic improvement melded with his already frightening power it left someone who seems destined to rule for some time in the lower reaches of boxing's weight divisions.

Agbeko, of course, will have none of that but Darchinyan has enough confidence in himself for both of them so it really doesn't seem to matter what the champion thinks. At least it doesn't to the challenger.

"I can't spend my career just defending, defending, defending," Darchinyan said of his three super flyweight titles and why he left them behind to move up three pounds to challenge for the 118-pound title Agbeko holds.

"I have to move up in weight and go after more titles. I have the power to demolish anyone. I'm going to keep moving up. You will see nothing compares to my power.

"I've seen Agbeko's fights. They don't impress me. I will knock him out with my power. I can open my jaw and let him punch it and he still won't hurt me."

Subtle he is not but Vic Darchinyan surely seems to be something more important - the real

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