

Klitschko-Chambers: Can Chambers Do What Byrd Couldn't?

Written by Frank Lotierzo

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According to several boxing publications and sources, Philly heavyweight Eddie Chambers 35-1 (18) will challenge WBO title holder Wladimir Klitschko 53-3 (47) this coming December. The fight will take place where most heavyweight title bouts have been contested during this decade, in Germany. If Chambers were to score an upset and beat Klitschko, he'd join Sonny Liston, Joe Frazier and Tim Witherspoon on the list of fighters who trained in the city of Philadelphia who won the heavyweight title.

The 6'6" 240 pound Klitschko stopped rugged challenger Ruslan Chagaev after the ninth round in his last bout to retain his WBO/IBF titles this past June. Only the WBO title will be on the line versus Chambers. Klitschko, who turned 33 earlier this year, hasn't been close to losing a fight in over five years and has clearly established himself as the fighter to beat in the heavyweight division. Chambers, 27, has been training steadily in Philadelphia since 2002 after making his pro-debut in late 2000. In his last bout he completely outclassed the 6'7" undefeated Alexander Dimitrenko in Germany. Make no mistake about it, Chambers is a true road warrior and has shown that he's more than willing to travel and meet his opponent in their own backyard to prove he's the best.

In his last two fights Chambers, who at 6'1" is considered on the short side by today's standards for a heavyweight, boxed beautifully and with purpose. Eddie has fast hands and throws quick one-tvos. He's prone to fight as a counter-puncher, but he took the fight to Dimitrenko and by taking the lead actually forced the long armed Ukraine to fight from his weakness, on the inside. Chambers also added a short left-hook behind his right hand to his arsenal while inside and totally bewildered Dimitrenko for sustained patches of the bout.

"Eddie has no fear of fighting big guys," said Rob Murray Sr., Chambers' manager and trainer. "In a way Dimitrenko was the perfect guy to fight before we fight Klitschko. He may even be more athletic than Klitschko."

Murray may be correct in stating that Dimitrenko is more athletic than Klitschko, but Wladimir has some tools at his disposal to cause Chambers trouble that Dimitrenko didn't. For starters Klitschko is stronger physically and is a more lethal puncher. On top of that Klitschko has a ton more experience than did Dimitrenko, and he's mastered fighting shorter opponents and forcing them to fight from their weakness, by utilizing his height, reach and power. These attributes present a formidable hurdle for Chambers or any other heavyweight to navigate when fighting Klitschko.

No doubt Klitschko and his trainer Emanuel Steward will study and dissect the tape of Chambers' fight with Dimitrenko last month. In doing that the first thing they're going to want to do is make sure Chambers doesn't attempt to bring the fight to Wladimir and get inside. Once Chambers is in there and feels Klitschko's strength, that alone will keep him from asserting himself in this fight as much as he did against Dimitrenko. This will work against Chambers in a big way because inside is where he'd be the most effective fighting Klitschko. Wladimir

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Klitschko has a terrific left-hook, but he's certainly no inside fighter. Most of the time he lands his hook from outside after he's made contact with either his left jab or right hand. Basically, Wladimir uses his hook more so as a set up punch than a finishing punch, despite it possessing finishing power.

Klitschko's jab may be often times predictable, but he has great anticipation and always seems to shoot it just when he senses his opponent is about to get off, thus disrupting their timing and distance. Most likely Klitschko will throw his jab at Chambers' chest and gloves to offset his movement and rhythm, with the intent being to knock him out of range and keep Eddie at a distance where he can't be hit back by him, but keeping him in range to be hit squarely with his right hand. Another difficult tactic that Klitschko employs-- he'll paw with a couple light jabs to induce his opponent to move into him, then instead of punching or moving, he'll wrap his left hand around their neck and pull them into him and force a clinch to cease the action. Thus, his opponent has to use up another chunk of the round to get in position again to get what looks like another clean shot.

In fighting Wladimir Klitschko, Chambers is in the same Catch-22 that Chris Byrd found himself in during two fights with Klitschko, that being he's too short and is lacking a long enough reach to handle and out-box him from outside, and owns not enough physical strength or power to hurt or bother him inside if he could get there. Chambers is greatly handicapped by his lack of size and power, thus he'll be forced to work and fight every second of the bout.

The biggest thing Chambers has going for him in this fight is it's happening at the perfect time of his career. Eddie is much tougher than the way he comports himself outside the ring. His confidence has to be soaring based on how he performed overseas in his last fight versus an opponent who's even bigger than Klitschko in Dimitrenko. Clearly the bout with Dimitrenko can be viewed as a perfect tune-up for this fight. Along with that Chambers proved beyond a doubt that he can prepare and ready himself for a big fight.

The problem is, Wladimir Klitschko is more formidable and better than Dimitrenko. To beat him, Chambers is going to have to be even better than he was in his last fight, and he'll need Klitschko to oblige him some and have an off night. And based on Klitschko's last fight against Chagaev, Wladimir doesn't look like he's on the decline and about to cooperate.

When all is said and done, Klitschko is a bad match-up for Chambers from a style vantage point. Then again, so was Dimitrenko.

Frank Lotierzo can be contacted at GlovedFist@Gmail.com