

Klitschko-Arreola: The Hard And Bitter Truth

Written by Frank Lotierzo

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WBC heavyweight title holder Vitali Klitschko 37-2 (36) is over 6'7" and usually weighs in between 245-250 when he fights. His reach is listed at 80 inches although it appears longer than other fighters who supposedly had an 80" reach. Vitali has pretty good boxing basics and fundamentals to compliment his physical strength and power. Not only is Klitschko hard to nail clean due to his size and awkwardness, he's exhibited a first rate chin during his 39 bout pro career. He's been shook a few times but never has he been close to going down.

When watching Vitali fight one doesn't get the impression they're watching a great fighter at work. Based on the definition of greatness that's probably a fair assessment. But that isn't the be all end all. Klitschko is one of the biggest heavyweight title holders in history and maybe his biggest asset is the fact that he knows how to apply his size and strength offensively and defensively. And that's something that has to be addressed by every opponent who confronts him. Vitali doesn't have a varied offensive attack. He basically looks to pound his opponents with his heavy and steady left-jab looking to set up his thudding right hand. Klitschko will step back when pressured and isn't afraid to hold and clinch to break his opponents rhythm. He also likes to induce his opponent to commit first or over commit because he likes to be in position to where he can see everything coming at him.

Vitali Klitschko may be a big and strong heavyweight with power, but don't let it be said he isn't a thinking fighter or isn't physically tough. He's never been on the verge of being stopped other than when he was cut against Lennox Lewis, nor has he ever had his butt kicked in the ring. No, he may not be a great fighter but due to his physical stature and cerebral fighting approach he would've given some former greats a hard time win or lose. Klitschko isn't easy on the eyes but there's no denying his effectiveness during his era and time. That said, he is 38 and isn't the fighter he was before he retired.

Undefeated contender Chris Arreola 27-0 (24) will have a tough road to hoe this Saturday night when he attempts to relieve Klitschko of his WBC title. Arreola is a breath of fresh air and easy to root for in a heavyweight division that's definitely in the doldrums. Chris is an aggressive swarming heavy-handed puncher that tries to end it with every punch he throws. And that makes him unique amongst today's elite heavyweights. He also puts his punches together in succession along with being fairly accurate. Arreola isn't a complete fighter but he's certainly not a stiff. And it is Arreola's presence that guarantees the fight with Klitschko will probably be pretty exciting from a spectators' vantage point whether he wins or loses. It's doubtful that Chris will freeze and just fight to survive. He'll fight the same fight and let his hands go whether he's scared or not.

But the reality is Arreola lacks experience against upper-tier opposition and tends to push and loop his punches from the outside, which will make it easier for Vitali to see and defend what's coming at him. Klitschko throws pretty straight and direct one-twos, and straight punches usually reach their destination before looping ones do. In addition to that Arreola comes in without much upper-body and head movement and is there to be hit. It's easy to envision that

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when Arreola does get nailed by Klitschko as he tries to press forward, it'll be flush and clean. And it must be noted that Arreola has shown a little vulnerability in the chin department, and that's not encouraging being that'll be his last line of defense.

Arreola has excited boxing fans with his kill or be killed style. Not to mention he gives honest and entertaining interviews after his fights. The problem is no one knows for sure just how good he really is and whether or not he's a genuine life-taking puncher. His biggest wins were over trial horse Jameel McCline and undefeated prospect Chazz Witherspoon. He pretty much went through McCline without much resistance which was predictable. Witherspoon had his moments against Arreola, but Chris was undeterred and once Chazz was hurt he showed the killer instinct and finishing ability you like to see and got rid of him.

If Arreola's trainer is smart, he'd instruct Chris to start by punching low, then bang to Vitali's biceps, hips, shoulders, or anyplace that's subject to physical breakdown while also looking for a clear legit shot at whatever he can find.

The bottom line is Arreola is never gonna be put together and cut like Mike Weaver, but that doesn't mean he's not in shape. He also could use a little more experience. Then again he is what he is and is never going to be a great fighter. He also can't turn down a title shot against a 38 year old title holder who was inactive for almost four years and one whose body has betrayed him before in the gym and on fight night. It's also not a secret that one night Vitali did quit in a big spot during a fight in which he had a commanding lead when his body faltered.

In a perfect world Arreola would probably benefit from being a little more flowered. Then again he may never get better. The fight makes sense for him at this time. And the fact that he comes to fight is a big plus. Let's not forget Vitali Klitschko hasn't been under the gun or in a real fire fight since June of 2003 when he lost to heavyweight champ Lennox Lewis. Plus Vitali looked lousy and was a little winded and tired in his last fight against Juan Carlos Gomez. That's worth remembering.

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