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This coming December 12th, WBC heavyweight champ Vitali Klitschko 38-2 (37) will fight for the third time this year when he defends his title against American Kevin Johnson 22-0 (9) in Berne, Switzerland. Klitschko just fought three weeks ago and stopped another undefeated American heavyweight, Cris Arreola, in the 10th round.

Vitali's performance against Arreola was one of the most complete showings of his career. Klitschko showed a varied attack and good mobility while shutting down and neutralizing the forward-pressing and hard-hitting Arreola for the entire 30 minutes they shared in the ring.

Kevin Johnson seems like a decent and engaging guy. At 30 years-old he's at or close to his physical prime, and he's no doubt showed improvement and maturity during the last year he's fought. But like it is for every other heavyweight contender excluding Vitali's brother Wladimir, it's hard to find a reason to pick him to topple the elder Klitschko. In all honesty we're basically reduced to hoping Johnson can be competitive and at least make it reasonably compelling while the fight lasts. And that doesn't mean just going the distance and losing every round except the ones Klitschko decides to catch a breather and take off. Then again going the distance with Vitali may be something to brag about since he's stopped 37 of the 38 fighters he's defeated.

Kevin Johnson is a good boxer with not much power. Like most "Boxers" he prefers to move away and circle his opponents and lead with his jab. He only really asserts himself if he's fighting someone who is beneath his skill level and he feels they can't hurt him in any way physically. Sometimes he plays a con game and tries to inject a little trickery into his repertoire, but he's not the most imaginative fighter around. And lastly his motivation and intensity leave a little to be desired.

It's easy to say who's Kevin Johnson fought up to this point that somewhat resembles an upper-tier heavyweight? Actually it's something that can be said about any undefeated and untested heavyweight fighting in 2009 getting ready to fight Vitali Klitschko. It's not like there's a couple of clones roaming in the division who resemble either Vitali or Wladimir Klitschko to help another contender prepare for a fight with either one of them. And the reality is if any top heavyweight wants to cash in and have a say in the division the Klitschkos have to be addressed and dealt with.

The questions surrounding Kevin Johnson are not unlike those asked about a lot of the top heavyweights in the division. How physically strong is he and does he have the type of strength that's applicable in the ring? It's already known that he's no puncher and will have to go the distance if he's to beat Klitschko. In addition to that his stamina and chin haven't been tested in a big spot versus a heavy handed puncher like Vitali. Again, it's not like there's a plethora of punchers fighting today who he could've met on the way up to give any indication to what kind of a beard he has.

To date the 30 year-old Johnson just hasn't shown anything that would indicate he can push

the 38 year-old Klitschko off the cliff and take his WBC title. From a style vantage point there's nothing to hang your hat on to make the case for Kevin to pull the upset. It's not remotely possible that he can win the fight outside and outbox Vitali. The more likely scenario is once they touch each other Johnson will be the fighter who breaks the exchange. And what if he senses he can't win playing tag with the jab from outside, then his only choice is to pressure Klitschko. As we saw with Cris Arreola, it takes more than just walking towards Vitali to rattle him, it takes real pressure. And Johnson isn't that type of fighter so the odds of him forcing Vitali to work and tire himself out are minuscule.

The other problem Kevin Johnson has to hurdle is the fact that Vitali Klitschko can fight. He may not look all that fluid and smooth and doesn't overwhelm fans with Muhammad Ali type flash and brilliance, nor does he produce Joe Louis picturesque knockouts, but the guy knows what he's doing inside the ring. And it's more than just him knowing how to impose his size and strength. He can box and has a great sense of distance and timing along with a good defense. He hits you with punches that you don't see and they come from unconventional angles, and that makes up for his lack of speed.

Vitali is also very strong physically and can fight on the move going to his left or right, something that's very befuddling, especially for a fighter who isn't all that experienced at the A-level. It's hard to think of one heavyweight fighting today who is extremely effective fighting as the aggressor; change directions on them and you might as well put a blindfold over their eyes. Add to that they're getting hit cleanly and can't get off themself, it's not long before they are thinking more about going the distance than winning.

To beat Vitali Klitschko it'll take a fighter with a multi-faceted ring attack and fight plan. Klitschko's boxing IQ and aptitude is much higher than he ever gets credit for and he's fighting with a confidence level right now that appears to be unshakable. Ask yourself if Johnson has the size, strength and toughness to negate Vitali's size, strength, style and power? It's doubtful Kevin has the power to disrupt Klitschko enough with the few clean shots he'll get through with, at least to the point where Vitali has to stray from what he wants to do during the fight. And if Johnson can't make Klitschko do anything he doesn't want to during the fight, the question isn't if he'll win, it's if he can even make a fight of it?

The odds are when the fight is over Kevin Johnson will echo the same thing Cris Arreola did after he fought Vitali Klitschko, and say "he's much better than I thought he was."

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