

## C'mon Now! Shouldn't Bute Be In That Super Six Tourney?

Written by Ron Borges

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Remind me again why Lucian Bute isn't in SHOWTIME's Super Six super middleweight tournament?

Bute's total annihilation of Librado Andrade last weekend brought that question to mind, although it's been there ever since the original lineup was announced and the undefeated IBF champion wasn't on the list.

The undefeated Bute is the only holder of a major recognized title not included in SHOWTIME'S tournament and one assumes the reason for that is that former WBA champion Mikkel Kessler and reigning WBC champion Carl Froch were better known Europeans, as is undefeated former middleweight champion Arthur Abraham, who is also in the event.

With three Europeans filling half the slots, SHOWTIME bowed to geography and American insularity and ignored the Romanian-born, Canadian citizen, opting instead for three U.S.-born fighters –ex-middleweight champion Jermain Taylor, Andre Dirrell and recently crowned WBA super middleweight title holder Andre Ward - to fill out the lineup.

Of those, only Ward won his first round fight, beating up Kessler in a fashion that has turned him from underdog to co-favorite to win the whole thing. Where this all leaves Bute is on the outside looking in with really no one in his division left for him to fight now that those six are tied up for the next year and a half or so with their contractual obligations to SHOWTIME.

If Taylor pulls out after being knocked out for the second straight fight (by first Froch and now Abraham), it is believed he will be replaced by Allan Green (29-1) so there's probably no play for Bute there. SHOWTIME has never said for sure that Green is the first alternate but that has long been the supposition in boxing circles.

If that promise has been made it should be honored. But if not, Bute deserves the slot, one he has earned by virtue of being 25-0 with 20 knockouts and clearly one of the best super middleweights in the world.

If Green joins the tournament it removes him as well as a potential Bute opponent, leaving the IBF champion only the likes of dangerous but flawed Edison Miranda to do some business with. This week Golden Boy Promotions CEO Richard Schaefer suggested Bernard Hopkins could move down to 168 to challenge Bute in what might well be a decent money fight for him but as Kelly Pavlik and Felix Trinidad, among others, have learned the hard way, Hopkins is a guy best left alone even if he will turn 45 in a few weeks.

If Bute can keep winning long enough he could eventually be in position for a very big-money fight with whomever emerges as the SHOWTIME champion but that's a long ways away. What

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is unfortunate is that Bute proved in his rematch with Andrade that he belonged in that super middleweight mix all along.

He actually had dominated Andrade in their first fight until he ran out of gas late and was on the ropes when the final bell sounded. Some tried to suggest the fight should have been stopped and Andrade awarded a TKO. That seemed a reach at the time and even moreso after watching the rematch, in which Bute dropped Andrade for the first time in his career with a short left hand to the head and finished him not long after he got up with a body shot to the solar plexus that doubled him over and left him helpless.

"This was the real Lucian Bute," Bute claimed.

Whatever Lucian Bute it was it was one who looked good enough to be in any Super Six Super Middleweight tournament you could come up with.