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There is a title on the line on Saturday night, when Julio Cesar Chavez takes on Irelands John Duddy, the man once referred to as The Derry Destroyer but now referred as...welll..hes simply not referred to as much as he was say, three or so years ago.

The title, which I contemplated not mentioning because its existence borders on the ludicrous, is the WBC silver middleweight title. This title is an invention of the World Boxing Council, which currently boasts Sergio Martinez as their regular middleweight champion, and Sebastian Zbik as their interim champion. Now, why Martinez isnt called their gold champion, if a silver belt is now in play, we arent sure. Why they have an interim champion, I cant say, because the whole deal bores me, and trying to discern the reasoning of the WBC is like trying to make sense of Really, we dont care a stitch, and only mention it because we are somewhat perverse in calling out the sanctioning body silliness, when in fact it might be a wiser course to cease mentioning them at all, and let them die off on their own lack of merit.

(On the other hand, it is nice for boxers to fight for something tangible, aside from money. Why shouldnt a man get to strap a belt around his waist after plugging away for so many years, and proudly show off the fruit of their labor?)

For Chavez Jr (41-0 with 30 KOs, coming off a sleep inducing win over Troy Rowland on the Pacquiao-Cotto undercard) and Duddy (29-1 with 18 KOs, just one coming in his last eight starts), what is at stake is less tangible.

Really, credibility is up for grabs.

All of us have seen Chavez Jr on PPV undercards, matched against foes picked by the Top Rank matchmaking crew with the utmost precision, looking underwhelming. Not even in comparison to his iconic dad, even, just underwhelming period.

And Duddys buzz peaked three years ago. Right after ex middleweight champ Jake Lamotta signed off on the kid, saying, Hes my type of the fighter, because thats the way I fought, when the Irishman was 18-0 with 15 KOs. Hes on his way, he could do it, hes got the power, he can take a good punch, I like him very much.

Some whispers began when he had a tougher time than some thought he shouldve against Yory Boy Campas in Sept. 2006. Whispers multiplied when he didnt overwhelm against Dupre Strickland in May 2007, but Strickland is a spoiler-survivor. The buzz factory went into severe slowdown mode when Duddy was life or death with Walid Smichet in Feb. 2008, on the Wladimir Klitschko-Sultan Ibragimov undercard at Madison Square Garden. Not ready for primetime, Duddy busters said. Not even ready for pre primetime, the busters brayed when Duddy lost to Billy Lyell, who was termed a B level boxer by his own trainer, Jack Loew, after the Irishman dropped a SD10 in April 2009. The Top Rank makers sifted through piles of journeyman with more scrutiny from that point on, and the Queens, NY-based hitter racked up

Ws against Michi Munoz, Juan Astorga, and Michael Medina. Three years ago, Duddy was being built to have a showdown with Jermain Taylor in New York, and then after that planners pondered a battle with Kelly Pavlik, a throwback all-Caucasian clash that could have been marketed to the moon. Amid all that, trainers were scapegoated, and backers were jettisoned amid ugly allegations of financial impropriety (them) and conspicious ingratitude (Duddy).

One lesson to be learned from all this, I guess, is that sometimes dealmakers let things simmer so long, the stew gets reduced to glop. Might it have been better to pull the trigger early on Duddy, and book him against Taylor in a St Paddys day beef in 2008? As of now, its looking like that hindsight call is 20/20. But lets let the Duddy arc play out, shall we?

Perhaps this crossroads clash will bring out the best in the Derry kid, who is actually no longer a kid, at 31? Maybe he gets it that his window is open a crack and he wont be fed cooperators infinitely. Maybe hell let some of his ancestral ire bubble, and hell fight with some old style fury, instead of in the style hes taken on in recent years, as that of boxer-mover, instead of brawler looking to put some hurt on his foe.

For Chavez Jr, the stakes arent as high. The kid is still a kid. Really, has anyone checked if he actually even shaves yet? Hes 24, and even with a loss, if he desires to keep at it, he can be fed cooperators for another few years, until hes more seasoned, and has totally filled out, mentally as well as physically. That hes open to improvement, and critiques fro new trainer Freddie Roach, bode well. Hes not, apparently, delusional about his skill set, and not merely coasting on his dads juice. He knows that he needs more tutelage.

I learned hes not lazy, said Roach, hes not all the things I was warned about, that he has no work ethic, his work ethic was great with me, he trained very hard, he did everything I told him to do, were working on some new moves, he hasnt accomplished making all the moves yet, but theyre in the works, hes trying thats what I like, I tell him to do something he tries it, I cant ask him anything more. Dedham Freddie was impressed with his 5 AM road work, he said, without needing to be Tasered out of bed. He has a great jab, and he doesnt use it as much as I want him to, he wants to fight like his father, the trainer said. Hes using the jab more and more every day, hes getting more confident in it. Freddie will be happy if Chavez uses his height and reach to keep Duddy on the outside, he said, and he was most pleasantly surprised that the kid has a decent personality. As for Duddy, Freddie says hes strong, and durable, is always in shape, and has a good right hand, which Junior has a tendency to get hit with.

TSS U, who among you will be buying this PPV scrap? Are you excited or cringing at the prospect of a Marco Antonio Barrera comeback? You like Junior or Duddy in the main event? Do you see both men exceeding expectations? Weigh in!