

Sam Peter Is 0-2 Against Klitschkos...Can He Break The Streak Against Wlad?

Written by Rick Folstad
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Their first fight back in 2005 was one of those barroom brawls that make you think of busted bar stools, smashed liquor bottles and guys getting knocked through large plate-glass windows.

You can wait all year for a fight like that and never see one unless you're watching a John Wayne marathon.

But there was a pretty good one back on Sept. 24, 2005 in Atlantic City, N.J.

What happened was, Samuel "The Nigerian Nightmare" Peter knocked Wladimir Klitschko down three times and still managed to lose the fight, which is a pretty good trick. It's like spending the evening dancing with the prettiest girl at the ball, only to watch her leave at midnight with some other guy.

But that's why we have rematches. And second dates. Only this time, Peter isn't planning on going home alone.

"This is a great opportunity for me to redeem myself from that fight in 2005, Peter (34-3, 27 KOs) said on a conference call promoting his rematch with Klitschko (54-3, 48 KOs) on Sept. 11 in Frankfurt, Germany. "I'm going to prove I'm the best heavyweight (in the world). I'm going to be a world champion again.

That's good. His first stab at being a world champion didn't last very long. Seven months, I think it was (if you don't count the time he was interim champ) or the time between his knockout win over Oleg Maskaev and his knockout loss to Wladimir's brother, Vitali Klitschko.

Seven quick months. Doesn't seem fair.

So this fight is pretty important to Peter, who has an eye on Klitschko's IBF and WBO titles, which will be on the line in this fight.

His chances? Maybe losing a little of that extra weight Peter never should have put on, will help. Or maybe his new trainer, Abel Sanchez, will make a difference, kick him in the backside when he needs kicking. You've got to remember, Peter isn't going to Frankfurt just looking for a fight. Like all great punchers, he's planning on an early knockout. Then he can get out of town early. But he can't train thinking it's going to be a short night.

To hear Sanchez tell it, Peter had some "commitment" problems in the past.

"I've been with Sam since last May and I think his dedication has been the big difference with him, Sanchez said. "I've been able to keep him in the gym six or seven days a week, and we've been here (in Big Bear, CA) now for eight weeks. He's put in the work this time. In the past, he's allowed outside influences to contribute to his lack of dedication and discipline.

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In other words, his head wasn't on straight and he was a little lazy. Or maybe a lot lazy.

"Everything was frustrating after I lost the championship, Peter said. "I'm OK now. Everything is straight up. I'm going to be the best now. Big Bear is a great place to train, very peaceful. It's very important for me to win back the championship. That's why you see me in Big Bear.

This time, Peter is the designated outlaw and underdog, fighting in front of an expected crowd of more than 40,000, most of them not from Nigeria.

The Klitschkos are big stuff in that part of the world.

When the question was brought up about Peter's chances of winning a decision in the "friendly confines of Frankfurt's Commerzbank Arena, he mentioned that this time, the judges were his "right hand," and his "left hook.

"I am ready and prepared and I will not need a referee or a judge.

Sanchez says along with changing Peter's work ethic, he's bringing back some of the skills Peter let slide.

"Everyone looks at Sam as a big brawler or a big puncher, but we're trying to work on the boxing skills that he put aside, Sanchez says. "He needs to develop those skills again. You can't go into a fight with Klitschko with just plan-A. You have to have a plan-A, a plan-B and a plan-C, and you have to be able to use them at different times."

Peter's manager, Ivaylo Gotsev, said the one thing Peter has always brought to the table is his punching power, which Gotsev says has been a "missing ingredient in the heavyweight division.

"Another missing ingredient is the willingness to throw those punches and take risks, he says. "Though everybody regards Klitschko as a big puncher, he is not a risk taker. Samuel is a risk taker."

At 29, Peter is young for a heavyweight contender, but experienced. And he hasn't fought in that many wars.

He's also very focused.

"On Sept 11, everybody is going to see me in a different way, he says. "This time around, (Klitschko) will not get up from my hook. I'm ready, I'm prepared. I don't need no judge and I don't need no referee. I don't think Wladimir will be able to stand up to me for four rounds.

What's the date of that fight again, Sam?

"Sept. 11 is what I'm talking about right now. Sept. 11 is mine. There is not much I really want to say because my gloves will be speaking for me on Sept. 11.

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Oh yeah, Sept. 11.