

Will HBO Ever Televisive Female Boxing?

Written by David A. Avila

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With a single punch Kaliesha West captured the vacant WBO bantamweight world title on a crowded card last weekend. In the past a knockout win by a female prizefighter was a rare feat, but no longer. This new crop of female boxers can really punch.

West (12-1-2) is part of the new razor sharp crop of speedy and smooth punching female professional boxers who are filtering through the ranks. She wowed the crowd at the Staples Center with her one-punch knockout of Angel Gladney. The crowd roared partly in surprise and awe at her electrifying left hook.

Isn't it about time HBO televises female prizefighting?

A woman boxing match has never been shown on HBO whether on the regular cable viewings or on pay-per-view telecasts.

Throughout the years there have been many times a female fight could have been shown but HBO refused to do it. Laila Ali, Lucia Rijker, Jessica Rakoczy and Sumya Anani all fought on big fight cards that were televised by the cable giant but their fights were never televised.

What's the reason?

Does female boxing on television lack drawing power? Is it simple disdain of watching women fight? Or is it they're asking for too much money?

As a boxing reporter for nearly 20 years HBO has never refused to telecast or even entertain showing a female boxing match. Various times TV executives have refused to give an answer other than they do not have an interest in female boxing.

First, how does anyone know what kind of draw a good female fight will produce if none has ever been televised on HBO? If you don't test the market you'll never find out if one exists. People said for centuries men could not fly. Now we're heading to other galaxies.

Second, sure there are people that do not like watching female boxing. There are also many people who don't like male boxing too. Ever talk to fans of mixed martial arts? Most disdain pro boxing. No sport has total support. So a few nay-sayers doesn't mean a thing. Women's pro tennis had the same stigma decades ago, now look where it's at. It's grabbing millions in revenue and endorsements.

Third, the average female top contender makes far less than a male contender. In America the average would be about \$5,000 for a title fight. It's criminal. Male boxers like Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather make up to \$10 million fighting on HBO pay-per-view and that's not including a percentage of each pay-per-view purchased. Women by contrast make on average a mere \$10,000 for a world championship fight. Money is not the issue.

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So what's the problem?

When West delivered a picture perfect left hook to floor Gladney in the seventh round for a technical knockout nobody booed that fight.

Now is the time to test the power of woman's boxing. It's a perfect setting there is nothing to lose and only to gain. It's a perfect business opportunity for HBO to boost their pay-per-views by introducing female prizefighting. The women deserve to be seen and boxing fans would finally have an opportunity to watch female prizefighting.

The call is all yours HBO.