

After The Fall: New TSS Heavyweight Rankings

Written by Phil Woolever

Monday, 01 November 2010 19:00

THE LATEST STEPS TOMAULING MAJESTY - Instead of flip-flopping the Klitschko brothers once again based on most recent performance for this winters edition, they share the summit.

Weve got Wladimir winning the slugging siblingshypothetical hoedown, but that prediction only lasts until Vitali lands anoverhand right.

Meanwhile, in amajorchange since the first half yearof 2010s TSS heavyweightrankings, the top three challengers were all booted from their lofty positions.

Neither WBA claimant David Haye, top-ranked alphabet contenderAlexander Povetkin nor former belt holderNikolai Valuev, respectable fighters all, lost a fight or retired.However, each had more than one lucrative opportunity to face one of the Klitschko boys, with possible payoffs in purses and prestige. None of them was willing to face off, citing reasons for reluctance that ranged fromunfair contract clauses to simplemarketing savvy.

Since the assumption behind assembling such rankings is to determine a model of future challengers chronological successionin the first place, why list guys that wont challenge?

Thus, the thesis forour top contenders is based on who seems the most ready, willing, and able to put a duking dent in the K2 empire, which has become an almost immovable monopolyin terms of meaningful titles.

The result of the Klitschkos eliminating a majority of even minimally appropriate challengers is isreflected in the following ladder.

1/1A - TIE! K Bros - They have established such a family monopoly, maybe the only way to tell whos better is have them fight the same guys and see who gets the superior result. Since they shut out everybody anyway, it would probably remain a deadlock. Right now, since many major outlets have seen ties in previous,the Klitschkos (consensus champion Wladimir 55-3 (49)and WBC titlist Vitali 41-2 (38))should be the co-leaders for Fighter of the Year honors. Hopefully some of the bigger names will get bolder in 2011, but if not the broswont lose multi-continental sleep or German based windfalls. Maybe in another calendar or two they should have a twin bill blow out in Hamburg, then retire at the same time.

2- Tomasz Adamek 42-1 (27) -Adamek has earned the next spot by staying busy since announcing his invasion of the division. It looks like Adamek meant it when he promised to work his way up the ladder againstcompetent competition.Wins over Andrew Golota,Jason Estrada, Chris Arreloaand in hismost recent fight just last August, Michael Grant,have been solid tuning.Adamekis prepping for a rough waltz with rugged workman Vinny Maddalone. Just as Grant provided practice on working against size, Maddalone is excellent for working on power. Hopefully hell get a spring engagement.

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3- Robert Nordic Nightmare Helenius 13-0 (8) - Helenius continues to come into his own as a dangerous knockout artist. After announcing his presence with a TKO of Lamon Brewster in January, Helenius added Gbenga Oloukun (UD8) and Gregory Tony (TKO 6, previously undefeated Tony down 4 times) to his resume. In his most recent performance, against Tony in August, Helenius showed some star power of his own on Marco Huck's undercard. If Helenius wins big in the Finland Heavyweight Title bout against Atilla Levin on the Arthur Abraham-Carl Froch undercard it won't be long until Helenius is threatening a bigger name foe, close to title shot proximity. More ready than most.

4- Dereck Chisora 14-0 (9) - Anybody who argues that Haye, Povetkin or Valuev have to be ranked above Chisora or anyone else on this list needs to consider that those more accomplished fight veterans have had numerous chances to go for the gusto. I believe Bernard Bonte when he says K2 offered an even split to Haye with no subsequent ties. Haye hadn't earned that offer, and since he declined it deserves it even less. I wonder if he's willing to fight Shannon Briggs. If Briggs decides to fight on (big surprise), a fight against Povetkin would have the added promotional element of Teddy Atlas drama. Meanwhile, Chisora jumped on the offer to meet Wlad, and carries himself with a likeable, realistic attitude and intriguing confidence. Somebody's bound to give a Klitschko some trouble sooner or later.

5- Eddie Chambers 35-2 (18) - Fast Eddie has changed the pace of his schedule since getting stung by Wlad K in March, and currently has nothing in the pipe. Despite the supposed dearth of heavyweight talent, it may be quite business-wise for Chambers to relax with nothing more than a stay busy bout while a couple other big bruisers knock each other off this winter.

6- Ruslan Chagaev 26-1-1 (17) - Since Wlad conked him in June 06, Chagaev managed to stay in the middle of the pack with a UD 12 in March over Kali Meehan in what was billed as a WBA eliminator. Chagaev - Haye could be a decent battle, but the name of the game is rightfully financial considerations which will make Haye unwilling in reasonable risk-reward terms.

7- Dennis Boytsov 27-0 (22) - Well cut Boytsov some slack since he can't help it if sometimes his bones couldn't sustain his wallop without breaking. Russian transplant Boytsov has been sidelined since last January, but is scheduled for a November return primer in his adopted Hamburg hometown. Expect Boytsov's designated victim to get to sleep long before many of the city's colorful citizens.

8 - Odlanier Solis 16-0 (12) - 30 year old Solis faces big target Ray Austin in the WBC eliminator for Vitalis next mandatory defense. If Solis performs as expected, the 2004 Olympic gold medalist should get a shot by next summer. With amateur wins against Haye and Sultan Ibragimov and a little help from Father Time by then, Solis may be ready to do some damage.

9- Alexander Ustinov 22-0 (17) - Ustinov weighed 309 and notched a relatively simple TKO 2 against overmatched Oezcan Cetinkaya on the Klitschko-Briggs undercard, dropping Cetinkaya five times in four frames with arm punches alone. Ustinov didn't look special against Monte Barrett or Michael Spratt, but with nine fights since the start of 09, at least the 67 1/2 prospect is staying busy enough to learn.

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Will we ever find out how Haye, Povetkin or Valuev would fare against any of the previously listed ten fighters?

Would Haye - Valuev 2 be anything but cruel and unusual punishment?

Could Antonio Tarver 28-6 (19), as heavyweight : 1- 0- get in by default? Realistic odds are heavy against Tarver if he signs to face anyone on this list by spring. Tarver might not be able to beat any of these fellow contenders, but at least hes got name recognition and it seems sure hes willing to fight the Klitschkos while others wait since the 42 year old knows he needs to strike while the iron is warm. Tarver made a jump in fighting weight of almost 50 pounds, not exactly a recipe for success.

Unless conking chaos ensues for Wladimirs Christmas clash with Chisora, these rankings arent likely to change too much between now and next seasons thaw.

It was just announced that Alexander Dimitrenko and Albert Sosnowski would meet soon for a European title. That could provide Hayes next opponent.

The US cause could have to wait until Deontay Wilder, 13 - 0 (13), gets another year or two of seasoning. If deceptively experienced Harold Sconiers (17-21-2) could hurt the 08 Olympic bronze medalist, any tutorials against even semi-dangerous punchers should wait.

The heavyweight division isnt dead.

Its just, as usual for years now, completely under Klitschko control.