

FROM A DEUTSCHLAND SNOWDRIFT OF BEAUTIES AND BEASTS - If Denis Boytsov's career moves were charted the same way as Ina Menzer's, he might have won a heavyweight title by now.

That's not a negative assessment. Menzer had almost as good a year inside the strands as Vitali Klitschko in 2009, and Klitschko had a very good year.

Comparing Menzer's pair of close wins over Esther Schouten and decision over Franchesca Alcanter in '09 with Klitschko's trifecta against Juan Carlos Gomez, Cristobal Arreola and reluctant Kevin Johnson is an apples and oranges situation. The main punching point is that Menzer, like Klitschko, provided evidence that she was an active champion willing to meet top competition and would be tough to dethrone.

For his professional performances last season, Boytsov did pretty well himself. Boytsov scored three dramatic, one-sided stoppages and further introduced himself to fans outside Germany as a strong potential contender. Boytsov isn't ready to dethrone either one of the Klitschko brothers yet, but more and more people in these parts are talking about his chances.

Still, for Boytsov the question remains as to when he will step up against a legitimate threat, a proven heavyweight with some sting in the measuring stick.

"I'm very happy with my progress last year," the Russia to Germany transplant Boytsov indicated in a media release that some outlets treated like an exclusive interview, "I'm ranked in the top ten by all sanctioning bodies. I'll take a title shot any time, but I trust my promoter Universum and I'm willing to wait and see."

It was almost a business as usual situation at the Borderlandhalle in Magdeburg Saturday night as Menzer pounded out a hard fought victory against an accomplished opponent. Menzer, now 26-0 (10), stopped previously undefeated Ramona Kuhne, 15-1 (4), in the 6th session after a profusely bleeding cut emerged from ripping right hands.

The give and take main event was a perfect example of why women's boxing is featured prominently here, even on cards with recognized male contenders.

It was a close contest, with Menzer taking the opening frames but Kuhne roaring back behind some brutal inside action before the sudden conclusion. The pro Menzer crowd booed not the outcome, but the early ending of a match that was shaping up as very hard to call.

"I would have postponed attacking for sure (after the cut)," said Menzer, "But then I probably would have hurt her worse."

Earlier, Boytsov blasted out an overmatched foil with a so so slate and just about no chance to

Role Model

Written by Phil Woolever
Sunday, 10 January 2010 18:00

triumph unless you consider longshot emotional odds at around 20-1 for lasting the distance, which didn't happen as Boytsov notched his 22nd KO in a now 27-0 resume.

Menzer was deservedly the star of the ZDF televised show, with the live broadcast co-feature as Robert Stieglitz's initial defense of his WBO super middleweight belt. Stieglitz pounded out a 5th round TKO at 1:48 over substitute Ruben Acosta from Argentina. Stieglitz dominated Acosta the entire way, scoring knockdowns in the 3rd and 5th before the affair was waved off. Stieglitz was hoping to prove himself against Edison Miranda, who had to pull out from illness. Stieglitz and Miranda could still meet before summer.

Whatever unfolds her way, Menzer will be almost certainly be matched pretty tough yet again, her pronounced preference. Still, it might not be long before she gets sick of the grind. The appearance of bruised swelling around her left eye after the Kuhne fight seemed to bother her much more than the wound itself.

Outside the ring, the attractive and fashionable Menzer often carries herself like a model. She seemed delighted by the way she had photographers draped over the ropes during her weigh-in as she pranced around with her title belts and teased. Menzer probably means what she says about the worthwhile, painful price of being a champion, but that's likely going to get old.

If the 29 year old Menzer is still fighting in three years she would seemingly consider that a not so great situation. Maybe by that time, Boytsov will have faced a solid gatekeeper.

As usual, in a supporting role the powerful, efficient Boytsov scored some more big shots, including three knockdowns for the highlight reel during his two round steamrolling of Kevin Montiy, 256, 17-7-1 (13).

Its getting time to wonder when Boytsov will step into the potentially harsh spotlight against a foe who actually poses a threat.

Meanwhile, Boytsov remains in learning pattern mode, which could turn out a positive or negative in itself. The effect, if any, of Boytsov's primary trainer Fritz Studnik limiting his clients and stepping into more of an advisory role with Boytsov remains to be seen. Boytsov is currently trained by Arthur Grigorian from the same Universum stable, so it should be a smooth transition but there are no guarantees.

Boytsov can continue to build his fan base and defensive skills, but he could also wait too long and get stale. Hopefully, everyday life will continue smoothly for the stable seeming Boytsov as he moves up the ladder, but some unstruck irons only remain hot for so long.

Menzer and Boytsov have almost identical records. Boytsov has a lot more knockdowns and stoppages. Menzer has a lot more championship fights.

Menzer knows she can and has performed at just about the highest level of the sport. Boytsov, yet to find that out, has the potentially multi-million dollar future and plenty of unproven pressure.

Role Model

Written by Phil Woolever
Sunday, 10 January 2010 18:00

As for this year, Menzer will probably meet another European woman with a respectable, undefeated slate or go for a trilogy against the very worthy Schouten. The thing I'd like to see most is how Menzer would fare against some top North or South American talent, anywhere near her 126 pound weight class.

Catchweight battles against opponents like Layla McCarter or Melissa Hernandez could be classics.

For me, Menzer is the best female boxer on the planet.

If Boytsov does stay in a holding pattern, he should continue to learn from Menzer's example on how to conduct yourself at the top of the game. She remains one of the best role models in boxing's ranks.