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Finally after a month or more of speculation the anticipated WBA heavyweight title bout between champ David Haye 23-1 (21) and former champ John Ruiz 44-8-1 (30) will take place on April 3rd at Manchester's MEN Arena. The 29-year old Haye will be making the first defense of his title since since the former cruiserweight champ captured it from Russia's Nikolai Valuev in Germany this past November.

The 38-year old Ruiz took step aside money last year that paved the way for Haye to meet Valuev, fully aware that he'd get the first crack at the winner. Ruiz has made a career out of fighting the best heavyweights and belt holders of his era. In fact he fought Valuev twice for the title and other than the one big shot Haye landed on Valuev that shook him in the last round of their bout, Ruiz actually did more to the Russian giant but was hosed out of the decision both times in Germany because of politics and connections.

Earlier this week the press conference for Haye-Ruiz was held and Ruiz was a no show. To which Haye retorted, "We paid for his first class tickets over here, a great hotel and tried to accommodate him as best as possible. He didn't get on the flight. I don't know what his reason is." Hopefully Haye wasn't trying to imply that Ruiz had even the slightest bit of trepidation about facing him at the press conference. If there's one thing boxing fans know about Ruiz, it's that he doesn't fear any heavyweight walking the planet.

Then Haye said, "I will not only beat him but beat him spectacularly and knock him out. I'm looking forward to getting back to what I do best - throwing my trademark 'Hayemakers.' Ruiz is a come-forward fighter so I aim to get at him, break him down, and take him out in good style."

After seeing Monte Barrett get up numerous times against Haye before the fight was stopped, Ruiz will have to become a fossil on the night of the fight for Haye to have a prayer to get Ruiz out of there early or in a spectacular fashion.

Haye's vow to become the only other fighter to stop Ruiz in 53 bouts since David Tua did it 14 years ago makes for great copy, but I for one am not convinced that he possesses the tools for the execution he promises. Haye, like Floyd Mayweather Jr., has been great at self promotion, but his body of work as a heavyweight is a little underwhelming. And if he thinks he can intimidate or rattle John Ruiz in anyway shape or form he's mistaken.

Ruiz was a 24 year old who hadn't filled out yet physically as a fighter when he was caught by Hurricane Tua back in 1996. And Tua just happens to be the biggest one-punch banger since George Foreman circa 1973-74. Not to mention he was at his absolute peak the night he fought Ruiz. Yet it is Ruiz who went on to win a piece of the heavyweight title twice - whereas Tua has only fought for it once and lost.

John Ruiz is much tougher and better than Monte Barrett, and will be ten times tougher for Haye than the heavy-bag with eyes that Valuev fought like. This fight is only intriguing for one

reason, and that's because at 38 it's uncertain what Ruiz has left as a top-10 heavyweight. But if this were Ruiz of the 2000-2003 vintage, he'd maul Haye and probably stop him in late in the fight.

Haye says he wants to showcase his skills again in front of the British public, something he failed to do when he fought Valuev and ran like a thief in the night in the process of stinking the place out. When Ruiz fought Valuev in 2005 and 2008 (a much better version than the one Haye fought) he at least tried to engage and win the fight straight up. By the time Haye faced Valuev, the promoters and boxing establishment realized they had nothing with him and the farce had to end. Which is the sole reason Haye was awarded the decision against him.

Evander Holyfield at age 47 had a better claim to the decision verdict over Valuev than David Haye did. It's just that a sullen old Holyfield wasn't the right business move when it came time to relieve Valuev of his title. However, a young brash guy like Haye was the perfect guy to hand the title to despite him doing less against the Russian giant than either Ruiz or Holyfield did during their three bouts with him.

Because of Haye's ability to talk up and sell a fight, he knows the only way he loses to Ruiz is if he gets stopped. On the other hand Ruiz hasn't been the luckiest guy around when it comes to getting the decision in close fights. Add to that he's 38 and he'd have to beat Haye half to death just to earn a draw against him.

Haye says his goal is to unify the heavyweight title by beating the Klitschko brothers, Vitali and Wladimir, who hold the WBC, IBF, and WBO titles between them. Which he'll no doubt earn the privilege of getting knocked out by one of them if he gets by Ruiz. And because of the way boxing works, it's hard to pick Ruiz knowing he has to win by a knockout. And nothing is harder than trying to knock out a fighter who is looking to survive - the mindset Haye will approach the fight with.

Knowing the decision is a forgone conclusion the smart pick looks to be Haye. But Ruiz may still have one more good night left in him, and if he does Haye will lose his title in his first defense. David Haye has shown to be a shrewd boxing manager and his cockiness isn't the worst thing for a heavyweight to posses in 2010. Let's see if he can back it up like the wannabe Cassius Clay aka Muhammad Ali he's become.

Seven of Ruiz's eight defeats came via decision. If Haye stops Ruiz - even a 38 year old on——he deserves all due credit. However, I reserve the right to wait for that to happen before I begin to take him completely seriously as a threat to the upper-tier heavyweights of today.

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