

Chambers' Only Chance Is To Neutralize Wladimir's Jab

Written by Frank Lotierzo

Monday, 08 February 2010 18:00

WBO/IBF heavyweight title holder Wladimir Klitschko 53-3 (47) will defend his belts against American Eddie Chambers 35-1 (18) on March 20th at Dusseldorf's Esprit Arena in Germany. Klitschko's last defense resulted in him stopping Ruslan Chagaev in the ninth round. The last time Chambers fought he out-boxed the 6'7" undefeated Alexander Dimitrenko to capture a 12-round majority decision verdict.

As of this writing Chambers, 27, is thought of as being the best American heavyweight in the world. He has fast hands and is a very good boxer. He's not much of a puncher but has enough power to sting the bigger heavyweights he's faced when he lands in combination. A few years ago his conditioning and desire were thought to be in question by some. However, his conditioning has improved since he suffered the only defeat of his career back in January 2008 against undefeated Alexander Povetkin; it was a fight he was controlling for a little over the first third of it, then he faded down the stretch and was out-worked by the aggressive Povetkin who kept forcing the fight.

In an ironic twist, Chambers changed his perception as a guy who isn't always motivated when he out-boxed and ran away with his fight against the hard punching but crude and wild swinging Samuel Peter last year. It just so happens to be that when some thought Wladimir Klitschko, 33, was at a crossroads in his career five years ago, Wladimir got up from three knock downs and went on to win a unanimous decision over Peter.

Since beating Peter, Klitschko has won eight fights in a row with seven of them coming by stoppage. Only Sultan Ibragimov lasted to the final bell with Wladimir, but Ibragimov fought more so to go the distance instead of winning and perhaps won only two rounds at best. Luckily for Ibragimov, Klitschko had no gumption to fight and was content winning the bout by throwing his left hand sparingly as he coasted to a one-sided unanimous decision.

According to Rob Murray Sr., Chambers' manager and trainer the era of big plodding European heavyweights is about to end. It's time for a relatively small, fast American to alter the dynamic among boxing's big men.

Murray continued, "Eddie is going to beat Wladimir Klitschko. I'm telling you now, he is going to beat Klitschko.

"Klitschko is very methodical. He's like a crop-duster going against a Learjet. He won't be able to handle Eddie's speed and movement."

What Murray says sounds great in theory and no doubt plays itself out in the gym during training and sparring. But the question is - does Chambers possess the needed tools in his arsenal to execute Murray's fight plan? Granted, Chambers' jabs and crisp one-twos befuddled Dimitrenko for the better part of 12-rounds. But Wladimir Klitschko is much stronger and a better puncher with both hands than Dimitrenko. On top of that, Dimitrenko cooperated with Chambers and

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allowed Eddie to control the ring space and fight tempo, something Klitschko surely won't comply with.

Wladimir Klitschko has a very long and strong left jab that he uses to set up his sneaky, but powerful overhand right that follows behind it. He also uses his jab defensively, shooting it out there in measured multiples to keep his opponent in a defensive posture and off of him. In order for Chambers to make his jab a factor in the fight, he's going to have to either get inside on Klitschko, much easier said than done, or he'll have to time him and try to get off first and in between when Klitschko is getting set to punch. The problem is, Klitschko sometimes allows an opponent who's not a big puncher to lead in order to get them to step towards him as he sets them up for his sneaking right hand. This is a trap Chambers must be cognizant of during the fight.

Another hurdle for Chambers is, with him not being a puncher, Wladimir fights extremely brave and confident against fighters who he doesn't think are a threat to hurt him. That's why it's imperative for Chambers to sting or buzz Klitschko with something early in the fight. If by chance Eddie can plant a seed of doubt in Klitschko's mind, the fight has a better chance to unfold in a manner that favors him.

However, if Chambers can't get to Klitschko's chin early or give him something to think about, he'll be forced to fight as if he's carrying a boulder on his back up a steep hill just in trying to go the distance.

I give Chambers a slim shot. But the fact that he can't punch really diminishes his chances. I believe Wladimir is too big for him and will fight as a front-runner and bully once they're in front of each other in the ring. Eddie's going to have a hard time getting past Klitschko's jab. And if he can't somehow neutralize it, he has virtually no shot at scoring the upset.

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