

After Magee, Lucian Bute Wants Kessler

Written by The Sweet Science
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NEW YORK (March 15, 2011) -- With their International Boxing Federation (IBF) Super Middleweight clash just days away, boxing superstar and unbeaten champ Lucian Bute and European titleholder Brian Magee participated in a media teleconference call Tuesday to discuss their upcoming fight for Bute's belt on SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING Saturday, March 19 live on SHOWTIME® at 10 p.m. ET/PT (delayed on the West Coast) from Bell Centre in Montreal, Canada.

Bute, who signed a multi-fight agreement with SHOWTIME in November 2010, is one of the most talented pound-for-pound and popular fighters of this era. He has won all but one of his title defenses by knockout, including four consecutive victories inside the distance.

The immensely popular 31-year-old Romanian-born fighter lives in Montreal, where he routinely draws sellout crowds. The natural southpaw, who has supreme counter-punching ability, speed and power, is coming off a ninth-round knockout of Jesse Brinkley Oct. 15 in Montreal.

The 35-year-old Magee has not lost since 2006 and is also riding an impressive streak of four consecutive knockouts. Magee has won six in a row and nine of 10 since his loss to Super Six semifinalist Carl Froch in '06.

Magee resides near Belfast, Northern Ireland. His manager, Pat Magee, said Tuesday there would be a wild celebration if his fighter were to upset Bute. "There is actually a St. Patrick's Day Parade in Montreal the day after the fight on Sunday," said Pat Magee, no relation to Brian. "Our plan after we beat Bute is to have Brian lead the parade."

Here's what both fighters had to say Tuesday:

LUCIAN BUTE:

"I feel like Brian Magee was the best opponent out there for me at this time and I'm taking this fight very seriously.

"I'm really concentrated on Brian Magee. I really haven't had time to think of anyone else. I'm

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just focused on Saturday. After then, I will worry about whichever opponent is going to come after my performance on Saturday.

“I don’t really have too much time to worry about my next opponents. Once I sign a contract, I concentrate on my opponent and prepare two months in advance. I plan to win every minute of every round. If the knockout comes, it comes. But that’s not what I’m trying to do. I’m trying to win fights and so far I’ve been successful and that’s what I will do again on Saturday night.

“Once I defend my title with Brian Magee then definitely I would like to fight Mikkel Kessler. Why not? Him or anyone else in the Super Six is who I’m going to fight next.

“In all my fights I have a strategy and I talk it over with my trainer. We study tapes of my opponents and I see openings and I see mistakes that they make. That’s how I work on my strategy. During the fight I let my arms go and I let my boxing do my work in the ring. And it comes naturally, my knockouts. I don’t look for them but they just happen because I’m well prepared for my fights.

“I really don’t have it as a goal in my career to make the (pound-for-pound) rankings. My objective is to be the best I can be and to be recognized as the pound-for-pound king soon based on my performances and my wins in the ring.

“I have followed the Super Six from the beginning. I’m a big fan of boxing and especially since it is my weight class I have watched every fight. I study all the fights. I study all the guys who have been in there. I can’t wait for the Super Six to finish, so I can fight the guys who are available and out there.

“I’ve been blessed with having a good following in Montreal and they are a big part of my success. They give me a lot of energy when I fight and it’s important to have all the fans in my corner when I fight at the Bell Centre. But I’m a professional boxer and so far I haven’t had the opportunity to fight anywhere else. I hope to get that chance and would like to fight in the United States. I would like to fight in Madison Square Garden or Las Vegas. I’m not just stuck in Montreal. I will fight anywhere.”

Who do you think will win the Super Six Tournament?

“I do follow the Super Six and I know the matchups. All four fighters are very good and I have a lot of respect for all four. I find it tough for (Arthur) Abraham to have a solution for (Andre) Ward. In the other fight, I want to congratulate Glen Johnson for making it to the semifinals. He’s a great boxer and a great person and congratulations for doing it at his age. But in my opinion the final will be Carl Froch vs. Andre Ward. I really can’t say who the winner will be but I think it will be an exciting fight.”

Have you been frustrated having to wait to fight those guys?

“I was not frustrated at all the last couple of months. I knew it was a matter of time and it’s a great opportunity to fight the guys in the Super Six at some point.”

“I don’t think having Mikkel Kessler ringside is going to distract me. I think having a guy like him

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there just gives me more confidence to have a good performance. Once I win this fight, I will see what opportunities are out there.”

BRIAN MAGEE:

“I’ve had to work very hard to get here and do a lot of things to get this shot. I feel like I deserve it and I’m so happy to be here. It’s great to be fighting the best in the division on such a massive stage. This is where you want to be as a boxer. This is a dream fight.

“I always seem to be the underdog but I’ve always come through. These Super Six fighters are the best fighters in the world. This division has the hardest fighters of any division in boxing.

“I’m going to have to box. I’m going to have to fight. When you fight a guy like Bute you have to be ready for anything. Any time you fight for a world title it’s going to be a hard fight. Lucian’s on such a high, signing a big contract with SHOWTIME he’ll be out to prove himself.”

How do you feel about facing a fellow southpaw?

“It’s an advantage to me as much as it is to him and it’s a disadvantage to me as much as it is to him. I don’t like fighting a southpaw but there’s nothing I can do about it and I try not to think about it. The guy I fought for the European Championship (Mads Larsen) was a southpaw. You just have to get in there and stick with what you do best.

“At this stage of my career it’s great to get a shot at a world title. It’s been a long way up the ladder to this point but as I said before I think I’m deserving of this shot. Opportunities don’t come around like this too often.

“You always try to get guys in here to spar with who are going to be like the guy you are fighting. It’s been hard to find a southpaw like Lucian but you do the best you can. I’ve had some southpaw sparring.

“I’m willing to take the fight whichever way it goes. I’m not looking for the knockout. The fight is here in Montreal and that doesn’t faze me. It’s a great city and the people are great and I’m happy to be here.

“I’ve always had belief in myself. Having seen what Carl Froch has been able to do in his career and having had such a close fight with him, I feel like I’m very deserving of this fight.

“Not many people get this opportunity. This is a chance of a lifetime. Hopefully I’ll have this memory for the rest of my life.”

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