

Amir “King” Khan Speeding Toward Greatness...AVILA

Written by David A. Avila
Wednesday, 13 July 2011 14:06



LOS ANGELES-Inside the world famous Wild Card Boxing gym a small gang of reporters gathered around the ring to see one of the new wave of pound for pound fighters, WBA junior welterweight titleholder Amir “King” Khan.

Most of the photographers brought their fast lens because if not, you run the risk of getting a series of blurs in most of the photo shots. Khan is that fast.

The lightning reflexes of Khan (25-1, 17 KOs) will be tested by IBF junior welterweight titleholder Zab Judah (41-6, 28 KOs) next week in Las Vegas. Once upon a time Judah had those same kinds of bullet-quick reflexes too. He still has some of that quickness but he absolutely has the same kind of staggering power.

There’s the rub.

Two major questions will be answered when Khan meets Judah in a unification bout: can Khan emerge as the heir apparent to Manny Pacquiao and can he win the big fight?

Judah thinks not.

“He’s got all the talent in the world to lose and come back,” said Judah. “That’s what happened to me and that’s what he is going to learn the hard way.”

Judah was referring to his unification title fight with Kostya Tszyu in November 2001. At the time

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Judah was undefeated and because of his overwhelming speed and power was the odds-maker’s favorite to dethrone the Russian. Instead, he was knocked out in two rounds.

“Listen I don’t like to compare fighters to my time but come July 23, he’s going to learn the lesson I learned,” said Judah, 33. “It’s no disrespect.”

Ever since Khan tasted defeat several years ago, the lean super quick 140-pounder has rebooted with the help of famed trainer Freddie Roach to rocket toward winning the world title and making four successive defenses.

Last December his bout with Argentina’s rough housing Marcos Maidana helped showcase not only his fighting skills but battling heart as well. It was voted “Fight of the Year” by numerous sports publications. This past April he returned to England where he shut out rival countryman Paul McCloskey for six rounds until an accidental head butt caused a bad cut on McCloskey. Khan won by decision against the southpaw.

“With McCloskey he didn’t want to fight. He was losing six nil. Then the head clash happened. I think I would have knocked him out. It seemed to me he just didn’t want to fight,” said Khan, age 24. “At the end of the day he was a southpaw and I’ll hopefully use that as an advantage against Zab Judah.”

When Judah met Khan during the opening press conference in Los Angeles he told the younger champion that he was going to lose his title.

“No disrespect, it’s what we do. We talk,” said Judah about the face to face verbal confrontation.

Khan says that Judah told him he would steal the title.

“Zab was saying he’s going to steal the belt but nothing about winning the belt. That shows what kind of champion he is, to want to steal the belt. I told him I’ll let my fists do the talking,” said Khan.

The British prizefighter has a checkered following: people either like him or loathe him in his native country. But that can be a very good thing. Look at the career of Oscar De La Hoya, who had the same type of relationship with boxing fans.

Ironically, it’s De La Hoya’s company, Golden Boy Promotions, that is guiding Khan’s career in America.

A win against Judah could advance him toward a junior welterweight reckoning with WBC junior welterweight titleholder Timothy Bradley. A meeting between those two would catapult the winner toward super-stardom. But first Khan must pass through Judah.

“The danger is understanding Judah’s southpaw stance. He doesn’t fight like a traditional southpaw. He attacks from the left side. The game plan has been really well done. We had a

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couple of fights to watch. The (Lucas) Matthysse fight gives us a pretty good blueprint,” said Roach, who is training Khan at the Wild Card Boxing gym in Hollywood. “We’re going to have to nullify that jab and take it away from him. I think Amir should win every round. Judah is tricky with his shoulder rolls, he’s a little bit Mayweather and a little bit Pernell Whitaker.”

Whitaker is now training Judah.

“Of course my fighter is going to win,” said the Hall of Fame boxer Whitaker. “But we can’t underestimate the opponent Khan.”

Judah predicts that Khan will learn a lesson that the New Yorker learned a decade ago in valuing his speed and power over experience.

“I don’t like comparing fighters to other fighters but he’s going to learn a valuable lesson,” predicts Judah. “It’s going to be a great fight.”

Khan predicts an overwhelming victory.

“My speed is going to beat him,” Khan said.

Fights on television

Fri. ESPN2, 6 p.m., Pawel Wolak (29-1) vs. Delvin Rodriguez (25-5-2).

Fr. Showtime, 8:05 p.m., Diego Magdaleno (19-0) vs. Alejandro Perez (15-2-1).

Fri. Telefutura, 11:30 p.m., Abner Cotto (10-0) vs. Carlos Claudio (10-6-3).

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mortcola says:

I think Khan is very, very talented. Gifted, even. I also think he is going to be widely recognized as fatally flawed. The chin is certainly not great; he is brave enough to stand in there when Maidana has him on queer street, but at the same time, he has little in his defensive arsenal other than side-to-side dancing and earmuffs when under fire; he comes across as a brave boy, not a tough man, and he is going to lose badly to someone again, soon, if not against Judah (though I pick Judah in this fight), then someone else. Not Tough Enough....and not slick enough to get away with it.

Radam G says:

Wow! Boksing is differently -- I mean definitely -- in the eyes of the beholder. I see Da Great Khan as one bad, young, fast mofu with incredible boksing game and skills to pay those bills

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and climb many of hills, and even a mountain or two. He's probably gonna knock out Sucker -- I mean Super -- Zab in about four rounds. Furthermore, nobody is gonna do s*** with him at 140lbs. He's just too explosive and crafty. I think that his real test will come at 154lbs when the fighter are as explosive and hard punching as he. Nothing is weak about his chin. He simply had weak legs and a fudged up disposition by starving down to the lightweight division of 135lbs. Holla!

mortcola says:

We'll see, Rad...I saw him as bravely barely surviving Maidana, and having very little idea except RUN and COVER what to do when hurt. He also never threw another body shot after knocking him down on body shots. Not sure at all about the crafty part, either. But I can be convinced. Looking forward to it one way or another.

the Roast says:

This should be a good one. Zab has fast hands, good power, and is a lefty. Big test for Khan. One that he didnt have to take so kudos to him for taking this fight. I could see both of them down ala Ortiz-Berto. I think Khan will win but he is gonna get his chin checked.

DaveB says:

I think Judah is quite an average fighter, who they keep bringing back time after time. This shouldn't be a hard fight for Khan after six rounds or so. I think Judah is vastly overrated. I believe his championship days are behind him especially when he is fighting elite fighters. Khan seems to be very good, not great but good enough to get the job done here.

Radam G says:

Wow, the Roast, Da Great Khan has been working out with one of the best and fastest southpaws of all times. The cat name is Manny "PacMan" Pacquiao. Khan should not have much of a buzz with Super Zab. He should kayo him even though the very slick and great Pete "Sweet Pea" Whitaker and the Filipino -- Morris East, who put us P-boys on the map in the early 1990s -- are training the Super one. With all that said, you know that boksing is the "theatre of the unexpected." So anything may happen, except for another robbery like that Paul [Sorry-A\$\$] Williams was the selectee of. Holla!

the Roast says:

Good points DaveB and RG. Zab always fades after the first six and Khan has been working with the best lefty in the biz.

brownsugar says:

Khan can blitz anybody... even Mayweather... he's young, fast, and flawed, but getting to his weakness is almost as hard as touching a Klitschko in the face. Jab has a chance... he'll have

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to survive a blizzard of punches and hyper fast legs to wait for the right moment... Zabs got the power to end the fight... but whether he can gain the opportunity is another thing... If Khan stinks out the fight running like he did against Kotelnic he still wins easily in a lackluster (for the fans) performance if he just wants to move all night.