Written by Michael Woods
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Kelly Pavlik was supposed to fight Darryl Cunningham in front of his hometown fans on Saturday night, a bout which was to be featured on Showtime. But the boxer put the word out yesterday that he was pulling out of the bout, leaving his promoter, Top Rank, surprised and more than a bit miffed.

The current World Boxing Council (WBC) No. 1-rated super middleweight contender, Pavlik (37-2 with 32 KOs; age 30) was to meet Cunningham at the Covelli Centre in Youngstown, OH. Both the broadcast and the live event have been canceled. Ticketholders can get a refund by returning their tickets to the place of purchase.

“Top Rank is very disappointed at Kelly’s sudden decision to discontinue the rebuilding of his boxing career,” said Todd duBoef, president of Top Rank, Pavlik’s promoter. “Kelly’s team specifically outlined a strategy for Kelly to return to the ring in an effective fashion. Kelly’s team gave us their objectives and we set them on a course, which began last May with Kelly’s fight against Alfonso Lopez and was to continue on Saturday against Darryl Cunningham. It seems

Kelly has derailed this plan."

TSS reached Pavlik's trainer, Jack Loew, to learn more. Loew told TSS that Pavlik had talked to his manager, Cameron Dunkin a few days ago, and learned what he was to be earning in his next fight, which was to be against IBF super middleweight champion Lucian Bute. Loew said Pavlik learned he was to get around $1.1 million to meet the Canadian boxer, and he didn't care for that figure. The boxer was under the impression that Mikkel Kessler was offered around $3 million for the same assignment. So he took umbrage, and told Loew that he wouldn't fight Bute for that money, and if he wouldn't fight Bute, then he wouldn't fight Cunningham either, for that matter.

Did you ask him to reconsider, I asked the trainer.

"Yes, I did. He had his mind made up."

And will Pavlik fight again, period?

"I can't tell you that," Loew said. "Only Kelly can answer that."

The boxer had battled the bottle in rehab last year and was seeking to climb back up the ladder. He'd been in the news a few weeks ago, when cops were called to break up a fight between he and his brother. Cops said Pavlik had been drinking. He denied he was drinking.

Comment on this article

Radam G says:

WOW! Enough said! Holla!

riverside says:

1.1 million in a recession?What a weiner!

brownsugar says:

Being from the capitol of the Buckeye State... and living only 35-40 minutes from Youngstown....(one of the most depressed and deadly cities in Ohio) This is bad news..

But if a fighter doesn't want to fight... he shouldn't be in there.. trouble is..... I wonder if Pavlik even knows if he does or doesn't want to continue boxing? (this is the same path Winky Wright set upon 5 years ago and all he's got to his name is a lone defeat against Williams in all that time) .... seems like Pavlik's playing mind games with himself. Arum has posted that Pavlik was

getting paid 60-40 (40% for Pavlik).. He was to receive a Whopping $1.35 Million dollars. Which is equal to what Bradly was getting offered to fight Khan. Pavlik is nowhere in that league.

Even if it were true that Kessler was getting $3 Million to face Bute, he's more justified to pocket a lofty payday than Pavlik based on his recent work in the Super-6.

Personally I thought it was total insanity for Pavs to go after Bute without at least a few tuneups. Judging by his last performance and Bute's performances against journeymen... I'd say Pavlik would have hard time lasting 7 - 8 rounds with the transplanted Romanian.

Damn Pavlik... you could have at least cashed out in one final blaze of glory,.. went out on your shield and put away a decent nest egg in the process..... good luck with finding another opportunity.

Condor says:

Well said Brownsugar.

Not much to add, except it looks like Kelly's still battling his demons (and is well behind on the cards). I wish him the best but man ... not good.

mortcola says:

Good writing, Brownsugar. But, as they say, character is destiny. Poor, Stupid Kelly. Pulling out the Ace of Dunces at exactly the moment he needed to step up and prove he was still capable of rising back to the upper echelon. Denial of his problem; denial of his place in the boxing hierarchy; denial of what it takes to find redemption. And respect. Bye, bye, Kelly Pavlik.

brownsugar says:

true that Mort.. with a week to go until the fight.... what fighter this side of Juan DeGuzman pulls those kinds of stunts? Letting fans pay for tickets that had to cost a minimum of $50 bucks and leaving them twisting in the wind... It's gonna be real hard to find hometown support now.. he's lucky thers's not a drunken mob chasing him with pitchforks and torches. I had high hopes for the blue collar representative of boxing... he used to do it the old fashioned way(hard work, guts and a never say die spirit)

Some say Hopkins and Martinez stole his heart.. Coming back from a loss is what makes the best champs. By quitting Pavs is letting that theory take root.

... If guys like Chavez Junior can hold a title.. I'm sure there would have been a way thru carefull management for Kelly to reach the pinnacle one more time... hope he has enough cash left to invest in something lucrative.

the Roast says:

I cant believe this. Pavlik pulls out and wrecks the whole show? What a dumbass move. Prima donna shit. The working class hero cant fight for 1.1 mil? This is blackball material if you ask me. He hasnt ever looked good in his last few. How can any promoter count on him again after all these cancellations? You know what? The Roast never met the Ghost. I pull out of that memory.

the Roast says:

Just read all the posts above and I agree with all of you. I am so pissed. Go pave a driveway when it's 95 degrees like today. The Ghost is dead to me.

deepwater says:

Wow. Goodbye kelly . The people of Ohio are in dire straights. you should of fought for free if it meant helping out your fans. Kelly Pavlik will have no fans after this if any were left after bhop slapped him around. kelly had a quick run but was exposed by bhop. kelly has a drinking problem because he cant deal with reality. dont come back kelly. hope the people of ohio strip all the metal out of your house and sell it for scrap.

FighterforJC says:

Glad to hear Kelly's side of the story. I'm siding with Pavlik on this one. It might be a bad PR move on him, but he's right.

Real Talk says:

I was a car accident yesterday and when I was in the ambulancw another car hit the ambulance. That's right in one night. Concussion is what they said. Give me the money an I'll fight in place of Pavlik. Real Live!!!!

mortcola says:

If he didn't know what was in his contract, it is another way in which he is out of touch with reality. He is a fighter who hasn't looked good in several years, coming off alcoholism and rehab, having pulled out of five fights, fighting a journeyman in his hometown in an attempt to generate some interest in him as a competitive fighter again; he had a commitment to fans, his opponent, and people with jobs related to the telecast, and reneged on everyone; and he misses the irony that Amy Winehouse gets more web hits due to her self-destruction and demise than a million living, productive musicians - he is not "worth" a large purse until he proves that he is alive, in a boxing sense. He is wrong about Kessler's supposed purse offer; he didn't realize that he has every right to negotiate for better terms on the Bute fight once he shows up and puts on a good performance. He is wrong on every count....deluded, in denial, and responsible for disappointing many and cheating others out of a night's pay agreed to in good faith.

brownsugar says:

glad to hear you survived Real Talk,.. let me know what town you live in so I can avoid it when I go cross country... sounds like the traffic is murder.

Powerful Post Mort... It's a little too late to disagree with the contract a week before the fight... no excuses.

FighterforJC says:

It wasn't the best business decision for Pavlik, but in principle, he is 100% in the right.

mortcola says:

Which principle? The "don't honor your commitments" principle? The "I demand what I want, not what I am worth" principle? The "go ahead and f--- over your fans and neighbors" principle. The man is in deep denial. His view of principle is pretty fogged over. The only principle of his I agree with here is, don't get punched in the head anymore if you really don't need to. The rest is a gigantic, irrational rationalization for his feelings about not being as good as he hoped he was, and having lost a great deal of boxing credibility. Pretend the "others" are screwing you over, take your mouthpiece and go home. Nope. Kelly is playing the blame game to avoid his own insecurity about his worth, not willing to accept that he is no longer a star. Irony is, he would probably get back to the top if he did it that good blue collar way he knows how to do. And then he would have both a few million more, and some respect.

FighterforJC says:

As they say in France, Pavlik is just "keeping it real." He says this wasn't the first time they've done this to him. They tell him what the terms of the contract are a week prior to the fight. Should Pavlik have known better what to expect? Perhaps. But his job is to fight in the ring. Top Rank's job is to ensure Pavlik is taken care of and compensated for in a way that satisfies Pavlik. For them to not give Pavlik the specifics of the contract is THEIR fault. They should've given Pavlik more time, as in telling him before the fight was announced. It makes sense what Pavlik said, that he's being taken advantage of, not being disclosed the key details until it's past the point of no return, where Top Rank believes Pavlik would have no choice but to just take the deal since it's better than nothing and he's already put in the work. And Pavlik may not have the same marketability as he did prior to his losses, but he remains a major player in his division. He is fun to watch, gives it his all in the ring and his size and strength will always be a challenge to whomever he fights. He's also the only other signifcant American in his weightclass besides Ward, and that still counts for something.

brownsugar says:

What F4JC said is very reasonable... reasonable enough to make me change my point of view.... However the Rabbit Hole goes much deeper. There's a good interview on "The Ring" magazine (August 9th)site where Jack Lowe speaks out "I aint gonna be no Scapegoat", and some more rotten cats jump out the bag. Cameron Dunkin is also quoted along with Jack as

saying that Pavlik thought he was going to make $40,000 weeks before the fight,.... and have all expenses paid by TopRank and clear any proceeds TopRank makes after they break even. Which Top Rank provided for except the sum was really $50,000 instead of $40,000..and then everything started to unravel. Too much information and plot twists to repost it all but it makes sense and brings me back to my original comments...no excuses for Pavlik he had a meltdown and burned his fans on the way. Yes he can come back but he made that task twice as hard as what it would have been if he would have stayed with the plan. Good luck with that.