

EPIX Wins Big If Chisora Or Mormeck Win

Written by Michael Woods

Thursday, 16 February 2012 14:03



Come Saturday, late afternoon/early evening, the name Travis Pomposello may have shot up the unofficial rankings of boxing's most influential people. He's the COO of EPIX, and oversees the boxing buying for the premium cabler, along with CEO Mark Greenberg.

EPIX, a Paramount/Viacom concoction born in October 2009, has been kind enough to help feed the addiction of us fight fans, and give us access to fights that otherwise would have been off radar.

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The pay TV entity will show Saturday's Vitali Klitschko-Dereck Chisora bout, which will unfold in Munich, and be shown on a broadcast which will kick off at 4:30 ET. And if by some chance, some slim chance, Chisora shocks the world, and knocks off the WBC titlist Vitali, then Pomposello and Greenberg will lap up ample praise and attaboys.

Will that happen? Probably not, if history is a helpful predictor. Vitali (43-2 with 40 KOs) is in another class than the 15-2 Chisora, who has nine KOs since debuting in 2007. The dude doesn't lose rounds, let alone fights. But. But. But. He is 40, and turns 41 in July. Some have seen slippage in him in recent years, even if I haven't particularly picked up on that. This Saturday could be the day when his body rebels against him, when a 28 year-old Brit who has shown at least a propensity for aggression, does what no one has done since 2003, and beats Klitschko.

Even if it doesn't happen, I'd still like to throw Pomposello an attaboy, and think frankly we all should, because I'm happy that he and EPIX are giving us the chance to see the Klitschkos. Hey, I don't adore their risk averse styles. But that doesn't mean I don't appreciate their considerable skills and the opportunity to watch them in action if I so desire. We'll all get the chance to take in more heavyweight action, compliments of EPIX, as they'll also offer the Feb. 25 Alexander Povetkin-Marco Huck showdown, in which the Atlas-less Russian with a 23-0 mark will defend his WBA strap against the cruiserweight Huck (34-1; from Serbia, lives in Germany). The following week, we get to see Wladimir Klitschko (56-3; age 35) have his way with overaged, undersized Jean Marc Mormeck (36-4; turns 40 in June; ex cruiser champ), in defense of his WBO, IBF and WBA super crowns. Or not..maybe just maybe Mormeck will take me up on my special consultant offer, and take my advice, and simply blitzkrieg the more iffy chinned brother K, and throw everything he's got at Wlad in round one, and surprise him with shock and awe a la Corrie Sanders, and amaze the world.

If that happens, Pomposello and Greenberg, who was at Showtime boxing for many moons, look like full-on geniuses. If that happens after Chisora takes out Vitali, they go straight to Canastota.

I thanked Pomposello personally on a recent phoner. He came off as a likable, down to earth guy, not prone to excessive hyping BS.

"I can't think of another time when one network has televised title defenses by heavyweight champions in three consecutive weeks," he said. "I could be wrong, but I think it's

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unprecedented. I'm a boxing fan, like you. I did some amateur boxing, and worked at MTV, and David Letterman, and I love the sport."

He said that the timing was right to buy and offer the back-to-back-to-back heavyweight tussles. "I think the heavyweight division is the premium division. It's the perfect time of year, there's not a lot of TV right after the Super Bowl." He said he expects the shows to do well for EPIX, though we don't have the same knowledge of ratings for a premium net as we do with the networks, and the "free" cable stations which use Nielson data. But he's happy with the lineup of a heavyweight scrap, leading right into a blockbuster flick. "Captain America" plays after the boxing, so Pomposello is hoping he'll captivate a guy for a span of almost four hours. "It's hard to tell why people are calling Verizon and adding EPIX but we've been getting a fair amount of that from the boxing," he said. "It's been a great addition raising brand awareness."

Pomposello is happy to scoop up some bouts that fall through the hands of the bigger players, HBO and Showtime, or are willfully ignored. "I think maybe we caught them sleeping on these fights," he said. That perception will be cemented if a Klitschko takes a tumble, for certain. "EPIX is about competitive fights. Of the three fights, the Mormeck fight it's most probable (that the bout won't be all that close). I'm not going to make false hype. But you get to see Wladimir, and it is a mandatory.

I told Pomposello straight up I was rooting for EPIX, because I'm one who believes a rising tide lifts all ships. (Yep, sound like a 99 percenter, lol.)

"Thank you," he said. "We had Chisora-Helenius, it was a hell of a fight, if that Chisora shows up, who knows. It only takes one shot sometimes."

I have something buzzing in my gut about Chisora. It could be those shrimp I had last night at Oyster Bar in Grand Central. I don't expect an upset, but I am getting a tiny tingle.. Only fate knows for sure.

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Radam G says:

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I doubt that we will be shock. But it would be aight! Holla!

dino da vinci says:

For boxing to thrive, the fan has to see fights. So yes, this is great.