

## Dominick Guinn Contending with Contention

Written by Joey Knish

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There were no excuses, and subsequently no results, from Dominick Guinn this past Friday night. A fighter many had hyped as being the possible heir to the USA heavyweight throne came up flat once more in his attempt to scale the elite division in boxing.

In his most notable prior attempt, Guinn convinced us it was a case of stage fright that got the best of him as he was simply outworked by Monte Barrett when the two fought last year in front of his hometown fans in Arkansas. On Friday night Serguei Lyakhovich copied the blueprint sent by Barrett and the result was exactly the same.

After yet another major disappointment in a minor fight, not even Guinn was buying his own excuses.

The basics of boxing were not on exhibit as Guinn once again refused to let his hands go - as was the case against 'Two Gunz' Barrett. Despite the constant encouragement, which turned to pleading, and lead to screaming, Guinn didn't respond. Lyakhovich did.

Sensing that Guinn wasn't 'in' the fight, the 'White Wolf' from Belarus used a basic jab and heavy right hands to wear down his much-heralded opponent. A steady diet of body shots and opportune uppercuts took the will from Guinn. While Guinn would lean in and hope for the clinch, Lyakhovich would throw punches – a concept foreign to Guinn on this night. Basic boxing suggests that the more you throw the better chances you have of landing, and Lyakhovich did just that.

Considering the bout was not easy to score and the fight was obviously close, it was shockingly absurd that Guinn completely took off the fifth round. Apparently you can teach a boxer how to box but no matter how much you plead, you can't make him fight. Guinn did not fight.

Perhaps Guinn is in the wrong vocation. At 29 years of age and with a near perfect 6' 3" 225 pound heavyweight frame, Guinn was supposed to be in the right place and, perhaps more importantly, at the right time. No heavyweights beyond Vitali Klitschko and perhaps Chris Byrd have established themselves in the post Lennox Lewis era of heavyweight fighting.

Those looking for a ray of light to lead them to the next great heavyweight won't find Serguei Lyakhovich showing the path. At the very least Lyakhovich is big, strong, and understands the basics of boxing. He isn't exactly of championship material, but sometimes the desire to be the best can overcome physical limitations . . . just as lacking the will to succeed can overcome the best of skills.

One day Dominick Guinn may work himself back into the heavyweight top ten but as of now he is just another boxer we can throw into the 'pretender' pile of one-time hopefuls. In that pile you will find a Lance Whitaker, Kirk Johnson, Jameel McCline, DaVarryl Williamson, Michael Grant, and the list goes on with fighters who perhaps could have, but didn't.

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The division is so starved for competition in the top ranks that a second round knockout of Jeremy Williams on Saturday has Nigerian Samuel Peter the talk of the town. That's the same Jeremy Williams who dubs himself as 'Half Man, Half Amazing' and must have been 'half man' when he was stopped by Brian Nielsen and anything but 'amazing' this past weekend.

This past Friday night on ESPN Dominick Guinn was physically able to defeat Serguei Lyakhovich, but mentally he was neither ready nor willing.