

Wladimir's Ability Will Trump Any Thompson Adjustments In Rematch

Written by Frank Lotierzo

Thursday, 08 March 2012 13:44



Fresh off of his four round demolition of Jean-Marc Mormeck in his last fight, Wladimir Klitschko 57-3 (50), the fighter deemed by most boxing observers as the universally recognized heavyweight boxing champion, is in search of his next opponent. And sadly for the fans who like to watch and follow the heavyweights, there isn't one fighter listed among the top-10 of any of the sanctioning bodies who could challenge him who wouldn't be viewed as an opponent. That is of course with the exception of his older brother, the WBC title holder, Vitali Klitschko.

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If the rumors are true that have been circulating via newspapers and the Internet, it looks as though Wladimir will next have to defend his IBF title belt against the IBF's mandatory challenger, Tony "The Tiger" Thompson, 36-2 (24) sometime this coming summer.

Klitschko and Thompson do have some history being that they have shared a ring together once before on the big stage. That bout took place during the summer of 2008 in which Klitschko, after clearly losing the first round, dominated the next nine before knocking Thompson out midway through the 11th round to retain his IBF, WBO and IBO titles. Thompson claims that he entered their last fight injured and wasn't 100%.

Earlier this week Tony said, "I'm ready, I'm done waiting for this part of my life to be over and I'm looking forward to becoming the heavyweight champion of the world."

And I guess if one wanted to try and make a case for Thompson and how he'd fare in a rematch with Wladimir, it could be said that Tony's as big and heavy as Klitschko. He wasn't intimidated by him when they last met and despite losing all but one round, he actually provided Wladimir with one of the more competitive title defenses of his going on seven year title tenure. On the down side, if they meet this summer, Thompson will be closer to 41 than 40 and since they last met, Thompson may be 5-0 (5), but other than defeating Chazz Witherspoon 30-2 (22) he hasn't faced one top contender during the last four years.

Going by what transpired in the ring during their first meeting, on paper there are some things that Thompson may be able to do strategically that might give him a better chance to be more competitive against Klitschko this time. But in all honesty, Klitschko is the greater and more skilled fighter and it's hard to envision Thompson carrying out the best fight plan in the world for 12-rounds without Wladimir physically forcing him to abandon it just to survive. And making adjustments in the gym during camp and implementing them on fight night are a lifetime different. On top of that Klitschko is a more relaxed and confident fighter now than he was when they last met.

Despite what some say, Klitschko's isn't the most imaginative heavyweight you'll ever see offensively. He seldom if ever throws uppercuts and his left hook really isn't that spectacular despite the power it carries. His weapons of choice are his left jab and right cross. He uses his jab quite well to obstruct his opponent's vision and to disrupt their offense while he measures them with it to create space for his right cross. His right hand is fast, sneaky and he disguises it beautifully. Actually, the right hand of Wladimir Klitschko is the biggest single shot in all of

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professional boxing. At this time Wladimir has really flowered as a fighter and his confidence fighting Thompson will be soaring by the night of their rematch if it happens.

When they last met, Tony actually caught Klitschko with a couple really clean hooks and crosses and not only did Wladimir not panic, he didn't even change his expression. Conversely, Thompson, who showed a really good chin during their bout, usually stopped letting his hands go after Wladimir tagged him flush, especially with his right hand. His slow feet left him a sitting duck for Klitschko once he escalated his attack and by the end of the 10th round it was obvious that Thompson was looking for a parachute.

As for what Thompson could do to give himself a better shot to shock the world if he meets Klitschko again, there's not much. The worst thing a trainer can do is try and overload his fighter with five or six nuanced adjustments that during combat at fight speed don't really apply. On top of that, if a fighter is given too much to work on in the gym or between rounds, they shut down and pick and choose the things they're comfortable trying to do when they go out for the next round. A smart trainer who understands the psyche of most fighters knows this and will only give his fighter one or two things to work on that he knows the fighter can comprehend how it relates to the opponent in front of him when the fight resumes.

In regards to Thompson's approach and what he should concentrate on if he's lucky enough to get another shot at Klitschko, like I said, there's not much, but he has to try and do the best he can. For starters, he needs to find a good strength and conditioning coach. Wladimir's advantage in physical ring strength was pronounced during their previous bout. Other than Thompson having a reach nearly as long as Wladimir's, it's hard to find one thing Tony did that really made Klitschko uncomfortable.

During their last fight Thompson virtually ignored Klitschko's body, something he shouldn't do if he sees him again. No, Thompson isn't gonna hurt Wladimir or take much out of him downstairs, and he does leave himself vulnerable by going there, but he still must. The point is to give Klitschko something to think about and perhaps get his hands down a few times leaving him open for setup and finishing punches. Also, he must move his feet more when he punches. There were numerous times during their last encounter where Tony let his hands go but didn't move his feet, and in turn his punches ended up short and Klitschko was able to touch him without reaching or leaning in.

Lastly, if Thompson feints more it can pay off in two ways. One - Klitschko usually stopped

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whatever he was about to do when Thompson fainted, which kept Wladimir from imposing himself physically and allowed Thompson to force him to reset. It also would allow Thompson in a rematch to time Klitschko and catch him clean when he wasn't of the mindset to strike. These are some legitimate things that Thompson can carry into the ring for a rematch with Klitschko that may help him stay in the fight more and perhaps steal it if he's lucky. However, that's not taking into account what'll happen if Klitschko catches him good and hurts him with something that although not noticeable to the fans watching, hurts Thompson enough to where he starts thinking inside about surviving more than winning.

Even the things mentioned above would probably only work in a perfect world. And if Tony Thompson could do the those things suggested, he wouldn't be Tony Thompson. When all is said and done, Wladimir Klitschko is a superior fighter to Tony "The Tiger" Thompson and the result will most likely be the same, Klitschko winning by stoppage. And there's not much the best trainer or fight plan in the world can do about it.

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mortcola says:

Intelligent article, on the money. Problem with Thompson is that he is not a good big man, he is an OK big man - no ace in the hole, no game changer or equalizer. Accurate to say that Klitschko hasn't had to be creative in many years, and has thrived through sheer, disciplined, patient science - no one has made him have to FIGHT, improvise his way out of a jam, which is at the heart of so many people's lack of satisfaction with him. Wonder what today's Wladimir would do with the same Corrie Sanders who overwhelmed him all those years ago? A fast, unorthodox, power puncher with blood on his mind? That's not Thompson - that guy is in some gym somewhere, waiting for his pro debut.

deepwater says:

Wladimirs ability to put fans to sleep will trump any possibility of an exciting fight. zzzzzzzz. hayes glass shot was more exciting then the actual fight. i would rather see the ghost of two ton tony gallento fight klitco

gibola says:

Agree with much of this excellent article. Thompson's not bad but he's not physical enough, not clever enough, not hard-hitting enough and sadly not young or confident enough to compete with Wlad. I think he gave his best effort in the first fight, since then he's gotten older and slower. I think Thompson genuinely went into the first fight thinking he had a chance and got stopped in a one-sided fight. We will see in the ring whether he really believes he has a hope this time or whether he has a brief go at it and gets out as soon as the tide turns against him.

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That's not knocking him, it's just a fact he won't want to endure the same beating again. This reminds me of Hagler's mandated rematches against Fully Obel or Hamsho where a guy who hung in there first time got blasted out the second. At least Hamsho deserved a rematch, Thompson doesn't. Wlad ko5 Thompson and the wait for a real challenger goes on....

brownsugar says:

to look so much like a basketball player one would think that Thompson would have more pep in his step, But in truth the man lumbers around the ring like a Philadelphian version of Valuev,.. but despite his size he's much more frail than his easter block counterpart. Didn't start boxing until he was in his latter twenties. Had less than 30 amateur fights. and he's at an age bordering more on Mid-Life-Crisis than Physical Prime. Hasn't been that active compared to WK.. who seems to box as often as I use my gym membership.

Hope Thompson brings enough to keep it interesting while it lasts... anything can happen in boxing.

WK's right hand does resemble an 80 caliber cannon shell. The Ultra-green Deontay Wilder and the up and coming British hopeful David Price also leverage considerable pop. Hope WK can last long enough to meet the next generation. Then maybe we can see how WK deals with a real challenge. Thompson in the meantime can enjoy a relatively lucrative payday as he bids farewell to boxing.