Written by Michael Woods
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Johnathon Banks (right) will corner Wladimir Saturday in Hamburg.

It felt off, it looked off, as Wladimir Klitschko on Monday sat on the dais for his final press conference to hype his next bout, which unfolds Saturday against Mariusz Wach.

Emanuel Steward wasn't there. Sitting sagely, radiating serene intensity, which stemmed from his 30 years at the top of the training heap, breaking into that occasional bemused grin, with a visage that didn't betray his innermost belief, that the other guy on his best day likely wouldn't present any sort of a problem for Wlad, so long, tall, careful and powerful. For the first time since 2004, Steward wasn't to Wlad's right, a literal right hand man, and it hurt a bit to see that.

Wlad's first fight with Steward came against Lamon Brewster, and it didn't go smoothly; it was his second time getting his chin checked and not passing the test, within a year. But the big man and Steward clicked from then on, didn't they? I strongly suspect that while his heart will ache when he notes that it isn't Steward talking to him in between rounds, the absence of the

Kronk sage won't diminish Wlad's efficacy, or lead to a stunner upset loss at the 02 Arena in Hamburg, Germany.

After Steward's death, on Oct. 25, Klitschko (58-3 with 50 KOs; age 36) spoke about the loss. "My team and I will carry on with the goals we had set while Emanuel was with us because that is exactly what Emanuel would have wanted. I know he will be with us in spirit along the way and we will accomplish these goals in his honor." Fighter Johnathon Banks, a Stewart disciple, who fights Nov. 17 against Seth Mitchell, in AC, will corner Wlad on fight night.

The New Jersey resident Wach (27-0 with 15 KOs; age 32; from Krakow, Poland) has been trained by Juan DeLeon, the brother of ex cruiser champ Carlos DeLeon, who trained Buffalo contender Joe Mesi. At the Monday presser, Juan said the 6-7 1 2/ inch Wach has been training for the 6-6 Wlad since June. He said that he's been watching Wlad since 1996, assessing him. He knows Team Klitschko works hard, but he has "a great kid," who "hungry" and "young."

"On November tenth, I believe there is going to be a new champion," De Leon said, echoing what the trainers for Tony Thompson, Jean Marc Mormeck, David Haye, Sam Peter, Eddie Chambers, Ruslan Chagaev, Hasim Rahman, Sultan Ibragimov, Brewster in the rematch, Ray Austin, Calvin Brock, Chris Byrd, Peter in their first scrap, Eliseo Castillo and DaVarryl Williamson said before their men climbed thru the ropes to meet the baby brother.

History, common sense and even our occasionally lying eyes, who have seen Wach unable to pull away and separate himself as much as you'd like against Tye Fields, in his last outing, in March (a TKO6 win) and Jason Gavern last November (a TKO6 win as well), tell us otherwise. There not be a new champion, quite likely, on Hamburg on Saturday.

Wach spoke Polish Monday, and Klitschko German, so there weren't any other verbal nuggets for me to mine from the presser. A translation was provided on the Klitschko website: “It took quite a time and I have put a huge effort in getting these belts," Wlad said. "I am 100 per cent prepared to defend my titles again and I know what I will be facing in the ring on Saturday. I will defend the titles that I won together with Emanuel Steward.” Wach, in Polish, said, “I know it will be a very difficult fight but I am prepared for anything. If it’s gonna be 12 rounds, I am prepared, if it’s gonna be a technical fight I am prepared. I will do anything to get Klitschko’s titles. This fight will be very special and will be memorized by the boxing fans.”

Wlad did do an internet chat after the presser, on Google Plus, and during that he spoke in English about brother Vitali's success in the recent elections in the Ukraine. He admitted he is not happy his brother is in politics, because it is such a dirty business. "If I was not going to become a doctor, i was going to become a doctor," he said, when asked what he'd be doing if not boxing. He then recommended everyone should follow their heart, and not waste your time in life doing things that don't fire you up.

A month ago, Wlad in a video for his YouTube channel, talked about the Wach fight. "Wach is a very special fighter," citing the fact that Wach is taller, heavier and younger than him. The promoter is present in the Ukrainain, though I must say I don't think he'd do great selling used cars. (That is a compliment, btw.)

Wach's best attribute is...well, he can...that is to say..OK, Wach won't do squat Saturday. He is slow afoot, his hand speed is just acceptable, his balance and coordination is subpar. The long arms which eventually find the mark against Fields types won't get near Klitschko, a master at maintaining the distance he wants to work at. Wach can get some leverage and throw a right which can hurt C+ level guys--which is all he has faced to this point--but won't work against Wlad. I'm not trying to be a harsher here, I respect anyone and everyone who steps in and gives their best effort...but Wach's best effort, unless Wlad makes a serious mistake, won't get 'er done Saturday.

That said, one never knows, until one knows, so I will be tuning in on EPIX to verify my guesses.

Comment on this article

Radam G says:

Nope! It won't be the same. I even find myself pulling for Doc. Wlad againt this super giant long-chinned CHUMP! Holla!

Bernie Campbell says:

Hey RAD Holla your ***! Wach is probably better skilled than any other Hvt. besides Brothers K. Wlad has to keep an eye open! If you know anything about European Boxing, you have known Wach!

Radam G says:

I've seem the long-chinned C+ fighter get down. And he is long, stiff and tall. And da muthasucka will fall. Maybe he should've played basketball. The chump-up fatties and tallies, Doc. Wlad will easily been 'em all. Wach is going down down. His arse, Doc. Wlad is gonna clown. Holla!

tlig says:

Wlad is gonna get knocked out (hopefully).

Radam G says:

Romney was gonna kayo Prez O (hopefully). But it is still Asian Time up in da White Hizzouse! All the peeps in Kenya and Indonesia -- I mean Chicago and Hawaii -- are happy like some honey ants taking down a big-arse elephant. Hahaha! Holla!

tlig says:

Dude, there was a time you were actually readable (and had a lot of interesting info to share). Back then, you kept your, I don't know, "rhymes" to a bare (and ultimately tolerable) minimum. That's no longer the case and your posts are quite difficult to read, let alone understand. This isn't a personal attack. I recall there was at least one fake Radam. I'm hoping you are that one and the real one is somewhere chilling because his name and standards have been tarnished too much for him to still show up here.

Radam G says:

Whatever! I'm the one and the only and just as clever. Later for the fake. I hope dat bytch was eaten by a giant-arse snake. Chillax! And all is good, and I don't mind having to pay more tax. "Readable" is a state of mind. To each, his own kind. The one and only Radam G is always in demand. Just like a member of SEAL Team Six, in the air, in the water, in cyberspace or on LAND!

Doc Wlad Klit
is gonna [hopefully] kayo Wach's super-giant arse
like Prez O did Mitt.

We don't have to be "actually readable (and [have] a lot interesting info to share)," to have our own personal choice and voice. Holla!

brownsugar says:

Wach has a good jab and is a very functional boxer... he's like Pawel Wolak,.. busy,.. moving forward but with better punch selection and defense. If he manages to corner Wlad in an awkward position he will do some damage. I found Wachs fatal flaw to be that he freezes sometimes while getting hit... almost like he's blinking his eyes. This could be a deadly lapse against a puncher like Klitschko... also we don't know if he'll become timid when the first bell

rings.... if this happens it's all over before it begins... all said, if Wach is ready... and determined. this could be a fun battle. I pick Wlad on his professionalism and experience alone.

brownsugar says:

wouldn't rule out an upset

Grimm says:

I rule out an upset. I will chew my own arm if Wach - the 00's version of Primo Carnera - somehow defeats WK. When Wach weathers blood and let his arms go, one can see how un-synchronized his different bodyparts are. As you stated, he seems to freeze when under fire - WK is a deadly kapellmeister who knows all about the music of boxing, the rhythm of a fight, and the effects of disrupting that rhythm. WK will start cautiously, jab in the range, soften up the skull, start pounding rights between r 2-3 and be done for the night around r 8-10.

deepwater says:

Obama is good for all my gold and silver bars as the us dollar hyperinflates! Deepwater soon to be like scrooge mcduck . Bright side to everything

deepwater says:

Klit bores him to death and out oxes the crap out of him or he gets emo and goes for a blitz and knocks out the chin. If he blitzes him you know manny is there kicking him in the buttt to do it!

Bernie Campbell says:

There is a recurrent nightmare on this page that doesnt give a darn about Heavyweight Boxing. Hes just interested in furthering his deviant persona! The party Im referring doesnt know anything about utilizing the King's English. If I wanted popularity like him Id go to a night club or an AA meeting!

Bernie Campbell says:

Future of the Cruiserweights: Rakhim Chakhkiev will display his wares on the undercard against #15 ranked Andres Taylor. Chakhkiev is a former Gold Medal Olympian and poses an obstacle to evreyone in the 200lb weight limit!

Bernie Campbell says:

Rahkim Chakhkiev will fight on the Klitshko undercard! He is a former Gold Medal olympian and is the future of the Cruisers! Posses an obstacle for anybody in the division!