Written by Kelsey McCarson
Wednesday, 13 February 2013 10:58

When I talked to undefeated middleweight George Tahdooahnippah (31-0-1, 23 KOs) last May , he was anxious for the chance to prove himself. He had big dreams, like all fighters do -- dreams of being a contender, winning a title and being a star.

While it was impressive that he'd amassed thirty wins, no losses and a draw, the names on his resume were less so. His team, therefore, was angling for a showdown with a big name opponent that summer. They wanted someone who could help put their fighter on the radar, but it never materialized. In the end, Tahdooahnippah settled on another nondescript win against eight loss fighter Gundrick King. Still, something big did happen that summer for Tahdooahnippah. The middleweight signed a promotional contract with Joe DeGuardia's New York promotional company, Star Boxing. It was good fortune, destiny or perhaps both, the fighter told me later. Either way, he said, his goal was to let DeGuardia know that he signed more than just a flash in the pan that day. He wanted him to know he signed a good fighter and a big money ticket.

"I'd been talking to Joe for a while. I'd met him at a boxing convention. We just kept in touch. He kept an eye on me. Speaking with Joe, things just looked good on the promotional side of things. I'm 34-years-old. The time is now for me. I'm burning. I'm hungry. I'm in the best shape of my life. I had to sign with someone who would take me there as soon as possible. Joe was the best option. He's the best promoter for me, and now here we are, about to show the world."

Where they are now, of course, is right where any fighter yearning to do big things in the sport hopes to be someday: the week of a nationally televised main event showdown against a good opponent. It will be Tahdooahnippah's first real shot at the big leagues. He'll be matched up with all-action star Delvin Rodriguez on ESPN's Friday Night Fights telecast at the Mohegan Sun casino in Connecticut.

"This fight is everything to me," Tahdooahnippah said of the chance. "This is the one where I am going to be recognized. I've been under the radar. I haven't had the opportunities to be seen. The world is going to see how good I am. I am going to win."

While confident, Tahdooahnippah also said he realizes what he's up against in Rodriguez, a fighter who's two years his junior but has already been in with world class opposition numerous times. He's watched his opponent before, he said, and he knows he'll be up against a guy who's plucky enough to be one half of the BWAA's 2011 Fight of the Year (a draw versus Pawel Wolak).

"I know he's an action fighter, a guy people see and people like," Tahdooahnippah said. I know

he's been in deep waters before, places I haven't been yet. All that to the side, though, I'm not worried about him. I know what I've got to do. He hasn't fought anyone like me. No one as big, as tough, as rough, as hard-hitting as me, with good boxing skills, as far as big guys go. You know? I'm not Pawel Wolak. I'm more multidimensional than that."

Tahdooahnippah will have the size advantage come fight night. He hasn't once fought lower than 160 pounds, while his opponent will be making his first appearance at the weight after a career almost exclusively fought at welter. He said he'll try to impose his strength and will on the naturally smaller man, but that he won't let the size difference lead to overconfidence. He thinks his opponent will be quick and fast--sure, but he also believes Rodriguez will be at his strongest because he won't have had to worry about cutting as much weight as usual.

He's not your typical prospect, this Tahdooahnippah. He's 34 years old, married and has four children. He has a business degree, and he holds a day job as the Health and Fitness Promotions Coordinator for the Comanche Nation Diabetes Program. Perhaps this makes him less prone to looking too far past what's right in front him: a true-blue opportunity to make it big.

"I'm ready. This is everything I've been training for, waiting for, dreaming about, and thinking about. I'm just ready for that bell to ring so I can put it on him."

Despite his size advantage, Tahdooahnippah will be an underdog when the bell rings. One insider went so far as to say that he'll be no match Rodriguez skill-wise. Still, this boxing stalwart told me, Tahdooahnippah's size and toughness will give him a good shot.

The fighter seems to like it this way. It's a bit admirable, in a way. He's fought just twice outside his home state and *never* outside the high plains area, yet he's actually anxious to travel hours away from home all the way to the northeast against what will clearly be his toughest opponent yet.

"I've been wanting to fight outside of the Oklahoma area," he said. "I've always wanted to fight in someone else's backyard. I've always had this vision of me being in someone's backyard, being the underdog, the unknown fighter, the unknown person, then I go out there and shock everyone."

He'll get his chance. Fan favorite Rodriguez makes his residence less than an hour away from the venue.

"Being recognized on national TV will be a big thing, not just for myself but for my people, all my Native American people, not only seeing a Native American fighter in the main event, but a Native American fighter *winning* the main event, a person they never heard of or seen before. So then there's a new kid on the block," the 34-year-old said. "When I come to the ring, they're gonna see my dancing, the drums will be there. I have a charter bus full of Comanche, my chairman, the tribal leaders. I might be fighting in his backyard, but I'm gonna be coming in full effect. A win puts me on the radar for bigger fights. My goal has always been to get on HBO so the world can see my ring entrance. I'm gonna get it. I'm gonna win. Doors will open. Then I'll be the new kid on the block."

Can a 34-year-old become the middleweight division's new kid on the block? Will anyone be able to pronounce his name if he does? Tahdooahnippah thinks so, at least to the part that matters.

"It's been like that all my life," he said about the forthcoming nationally televised butchering of this name. "It's just part of it. Even the Comanche don't say my name right because they say it in the language, and it sounds different. That's why I took the name Comanche Boy, though. I don't expect them to get my name right, but they will say 'hey, that's Comanche Boy', they'll know there is an Indian boy out there fighting…and winning."

So a drum will beat on ESPN this Friday night. There will be sights and sounds not typically seen. From Native American Fancy War Dancers to hip hop sounds of Native American rappers to a 34-year-old prospect taking what may be his one real shot at being boxing's new kid: George Tahdooahnippah will have his moment. The only thing left to see then, is whether it's the sound of a beginning, or that of an end.

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deepwater says:

Watched some youtubes on him to see what he is about. Umm .... He really sux and it seems

like a gimmick and sideshow . See for yourself.