

Cold War Is Over, But Tim Bradley and Ruslan Provodnikov War Is Not

Written by David A. Avila
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Russian-born Ruslan Provodnikov challenges California-born Tim "Desert Storm" Bradley for

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the WBO welterweight title on Saturday.

Not so long ago, this fight would never have happened.

Bradley (29-0, 12 Kos; pictured above in photo by Chris Farina of Top Rank) defends the WBO title against rugged challenger Provodnikov (22-1, 15 Kos) on Saturday March 16, at the Home Depot Center. HBO will televise the Top Rank event. Its significance is largely diluted in this day and age.

The Cold War kept many of the best boxers from Russia, China and Cuba from exhibiting their skills until the last two decades. A number of great boxers from those countries were never able to showcase their high level talent, such as Cuba's Teofilo Stevenson who passed away last year and his fellow countryman Felix Savon, and Hungary's Laszlo Papp. All three boxers won three Olympic gold medals.

Boxing fans are lucky that those restrictions of the Cold War no longer exist.

Russia has always had a love affair with boxing. With its massive population and addiction to sports, there are really two sports that its athletes swerve toward and those are soccer and boxing. They love to fight.

Provodnikov and other Russians and boxers from Eastern Europe have been coming to this country to learn the professional style of boxing. Most are polished in the international amateur style but not so much in the pro style.

A power puncher like Provodnikov has always had the pro power punching style so the adjustment hasn't been much. His trainer for the last three fights believes he has the right tools to beat anyone, including Bradley.

"He knows how to fight and he knows the art of boxing," said Freddie Roach. "He is looking

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pretty good and we're doing what we need to get ready for this fight."

Provodnikov's only loss came to Riverside's Mauricio "El Maestro" Herrera two years ago in Las Vegas. That same fighter is sparring Bradley in preparation for this encounter.

"I heard that Bradley is using Herrera for sparring but they don't know what kind of preparations I had for that fight or what kind of trainer I had," said Provodnikov. "My training camp now is completely different."

What also may be different is the kind of fighting approach Bradley partakes. You never know with the Desert Storm.

For most of his life he's been one of the few African-American fighters in gyms filled to the brim with Latinos. Because of the virtual culture clash of boxing styles, Bradley has soaked up knowledge since his youth on how to beat this or that style and when to implement changes to his own fighting approach when necessary.

Basically, Bradley is kind of like a boxing chameleon. He can Sugar Shane Mosley you, he can Juan Manuel Marquez an opponent, or he can brawl like an alley cat stuck in a dead end with a pit bull blocking the entrance. There is no definitive Bradley style. It's what makes it so difficult for opponents.

Probably the most important factor in his boxing weaponry is his confidence. He oozes confidence.

"I am not worried about anything he is going to bring. He is going to stand in the middle of the ring. I know exactly how to beat this guy - outbox him," says Bradley. "Provodnikov has to worry about me, I am not worried about him."

Russia's Provodnikov fights America's Bradley.

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Other fight chatter

Khabir Suleymanov (13-3) fights Raymond Chacon (4-5) in a junior featherweight match on Thursday March 14, at Florentine Gardens in Hollywood. Also on the card is Oxnard's Javier Garcia (8-2-2, 7 Kos) facing Rasool Shakoor (3-11-1) in a junior lightweight bout. For more information call Bash Boxing at (213) 700-7001.

UFC 158 features Georges St. Pierre (23-2) defending the welterweight championship against Nick Diaz (27-8-1) on Saturday March 16. Their title bout takes place in Montreal, Canada. Also on the MMA card is Carlos Condit (28-6) fighting Johny Hendricks (14-1), Jake Ellenberger (28-6) facing Nate Marquardt (35-11-2) and Nick Ring (13-1) against Chris Camozzi (18-5). The fights will be on pay-per-view.

Naim Nelson (9-0) fights Georgi Kevlishvili (12-4) in a lightweight clash on Friday March 15, in Valley Forge, Penn. Also, Harry Joe Yorgey (25-2-1) faces Julius Kennedy (7-3-1) in a junior middleweight bout. King's Promotions is staging the event.

Peter Manfredo Jr. (38-7) meets Walter Wright (14-3) in a super middleweight battle that features two former alums from the Contender reality TV series. Their match takes place on Friday March 15 at Lincoln, Rhode Island.

Yesica Bopp (23-0) defends the WBA and WBO junior flyweight world titles against Venezuela's Carolina Alvarez (12-4-2) on Friday March 15. The world championship will be held in Bopp's native Argentina.

Former world champion Jorge Linares (32-3) meets David Rodela (16-7-3) in a lightweight fight set for 10 rounds on Saturday in Cancun, Mexico. Also, U.S. Olympian Joseph Diaz and former amateur star Julian Ramirez are scheduled to fight in separate bouts.

WBC female lightweight titlist Erica Farias (16-0, 9 Kos) knocked out challenger Liliana Palmera

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(21-10-3) in the third round to keep the title. The match took place on Saturday in Buenos Aires, Argentina. It was Farias' fifth successful world title defense.

Popular Alfredo "Perro" Angulo said that he's waiting for the call from Golden Boy Promotions to fight for the junior middleweight title. "Whatever they say I will do," said Angulo, including possibly fighting IBF titleholder Ishe Smith or WBC titleholder Saul "Canelo" Alvarez, after he faces Austin Trout.

Darren Barker (24-1, 15 Kos) stopped Simone Rotolo (35-4, 15 Kos) in round four of their middleweight clash on Saturday. The match was held in London, England. Barker's only loss came against current middleweight world champion Sergio Martinez.

[Comment on this article](#)

deepwater says:

bradley has bad karma.the cold war is far from over. Russia a world power just had one of its nuclear subs just outside NYC harbor. Putin supports Assad and the Syrian people and regrettably the USA is arming and aiding the Syrian al quida rebels. tsk tsk. putin is also trying to keep the bolvshvik agenda away from russia. russia used to be run by nicolas and the people were allowed to own guns and practice religion. the bolshivik communists came and introduced homosexuality and banned all religion and right to own guns. the bolvsvik commies then wiped out 100 million christians. history always repeats itself. who cares about bradley

Radam G says:

Hehehehehe! Wow! Deepwater, that is COLD! Poor Bradley! Hahaha! Holla!

stormcentre says:

Wow DP that's some heavy shite right there.

I think the author David has it right about Bradley, the fight, his style and how he's learnt . They're also some of the same reasons that Trout is quite adaptable, and it is also why Mosely went well when it all worked for him; as he, Bradley and Trout are all very used to walk up and attack style that Latino and other boxers possess.

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The explanation about how Provodnikov transcended relatively from amateur to pros due to his punching style; makes sense too. Although, Provodnikov - who fell in love with power and volume punching more recently - will soon learn, in my opinion, that skills ultimately pay the bills and charging face first into professional boxing ensures your career doesn't see much longevity, even if it does taste success.

It only takes a guy that can move, slip, slide and punch; and you're out.

Still you can usually get away with the style Provodnikov has for a while if you're a capable KO specialist, and Provodnikov does have the power to KO guys.

Unfortunately though, his power doesn't always translate at this level, mostly because Provodnikov throws without necessarily having a purpose, at times he loses his sense of distance but still loads, he's predictable and looks to destroy with almost every punch - particularly when he's faced with a tough challenge, hasn't dominated or entirely controlled and midstream of a exchange.

This is also Provodnikov's first fight at Welterweight, and he's in with a guy like Bradley that can change up and almost do it all - except knock guys out with one punch. Bradley has faced quite a few big punchers before, but Ruslan hasn't yet shown he can handle guys like Tim.

Still, time will tell.

brownsugar says:

There is no bad Karma on Bradley, only bad press.. it's not like he received 2 gift decisions like Paq did against Marquez. ... or took a **** on the tombstone of a saint. Bradley vs Marquez is the goal.... Provodnikov is the roadblock... can Bradley clear the hurdle?..... I think he'll do so in crowd pleasing war. Though ring generalship and controlled aggression.

Radam G says:

WOW! The Bullsytology that exist among mankind. The HATE that produces HATE is a muthapucka is what my Tio Mamoy says. Marquez got his arse BEAT! And if he didn't the fights that he lost and the trumped-up draw could've gone either way. That is reality by the majority. Bradley got his arse toasted and wanted to quit. That is hardcore reality by the majority. That punk Bradley even said in that ring jungle that he lost because he heard the gift verdict.

The savior of Bradley is his trainer Joel Diaz. Everybody needs somebody. Bradley is a B+ fighter, who's been lucky to get elite fighter treatment. Until now.

I hope that he will be able to adjust to the new reality that he has found himself in. Boxing is seedy, cruel and hardcore coldhearted. He should leave now, because for him things are just getting warmed up. A real Greek Tragedy he will be. I'll be bet on it. NO HATE! Holla!

SouthPaul says:

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Like a ol' ancient sequoia redwood, Tio Mamoy has a lot hard bark on him but even he ain't tripping that hard on Bradley. Truthfully, Tim is good dude, and I wish him nothing but the best tonight. I don't care one way or another who wins or loses ... As long as it's entertaining. Neither do I believe Manny got a gift against JMM. They both fought their asses off.. They were close bouts...someone has to win.... Someone has to lose. Nothing shady or dirty ..neither complex or mind boggling. It's boxing, baby (in my best Smoke Gainer impersonation).

Radam G says:

If you meet Bradley personally, and you are a Filipino even before he fought Da Manny, you will see right away that Tim Bradley can be very TWO-FACED, paranoid, ethnocentric -- almost to the point of being racist -- and delusional. The insiders of the hurt bitnezz know this, because many pugilists are the TB way -- straight @ssholic when lights, camera and action are not on or around them.

Bradley's good-guy act is just PR. By his own admission, he is a bully punk@ss [from] youth. Holla at some of the HBO 24/7 footage on him. Dude is a 5-foot-5 big-headed, long-footed DUPE of a victory over Da Manny. He has BEEN USED by dark forces, and really honesty believe that he is a FORCE in boxing with the big boys. Hehehehe! Poor fallin' soul!

I'm reminded of the old movie "Trading Places!" And you know that I'm gonna holla dat I had a bit part in it. Thank-you, Eddie Murphy. Hehehe! My lil' high-yellow arse is in everybody's syet. Hahaha! TB is also a modern-day Primo Canera. And TB even has the head and foot size. [BIG LAUGH!]

The game is SEEDY and cutthroat, thought you will find gentle ones like GOAT Ali, Rev (Big) George Foreman, Sugar Ray Leonard, Tommy Hearns, Marvelous Marvin Hagler, Big Money O, Fists of Stone Duran, the late, greats Willie Pep, Archie Moore and Dick Sadler, the boxing now -- Da Manny, Money May, B-Hop, SOG Ward, Sugar Shane, Super Zab and the list goes on and on.

No jive! Most boxers will kill their own family members in fist [sic] of rage and 100 people who look 'em or remind the boxers of 'em! It is some psychotic d*cks and a chick in this legal mayhem game. Yall better listen to what Uncle Roger May says: "Most people don't kno' sh*t 'bout boksin!"

And the wacky uncle also said that "Pakacow [sic] whup Tim Bradley's muthafu*kin' @ss. Dat used dat bytch." Holla!