

## Is Miranda THE Breakout Star For 2007?

Written by Michael Woods

Saturday, 16 December 2006 19:00

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Damn, that was quick.

Max Kellerman officially anointed himself president of the Edison Miranda Fan Club after the Colombian did away with Willie Gibbs in the first round in Miami on Saturday evening's HBO Boxing After Dark broadcast.

Mad Max gushed with Vesuvian enthusiasm after Miranda (27-1, 24 KOs) showed his power in downing Bernard Hopkins' cousin, now 20-2, a Philly born fighter who'd feasted on some soft Massachusetts competition on his way up.

Kellerman, the chief analyst on HBO's Boxing After Dark (perhaps sole analyst if the network comes to its senses and declares the Lennox Lewis experiment a failure...do we really need a Baker-Hamilton study to tell us that LL, while undeniably a stellar pugilist/specialist, is no natural when it comes to dissecting and sharing insights on the sport?), compared Miranda, age 25, to Earnie Shavers regarding his punching power.

Whoa, now, let's not get ahead of ourselves, Max...

Kellerman said that we'll look back and tell our kiddies that Miranda was the Bennie Briscoe (66-24-5, 53 KOs) or Julian Jackson (55-6, 49 KOs) of his day, a hitter who could inflict more punishment than Taco Bell scallions with a single swap.

Jackson owned the light heavyweight title, and had a nice reign as a middleweight champion, though he couldn't solve Gerald McClellan (and that's no great knock on the Virgin Islander).

Briscoe was in with a Who's Who of the most magical era for that division, when tough Hall of Famers were churned out like Brazil churns out supermodels. And while he wasn't able to prevail in many of the most high profile outings, when the stakes were largest, the quality of his opposition was positively scary.

And in mentioning Miranda in the same breath as Shavers (74-14-1 68 KOs), whose atomic launches shook Ali's kinfolk back in Africa when he rained them down on The Greatest in 1977, who made Holmes think his head exploded when they fought in their 1979 rematch... The dude arguably made more retinas ricochet than anyone else in the history of his division.

So, what do we make of Max's excitable outpouring?

We wouldn't accuse him of being an ultra-company man, angling for a fatter year-end bonus from the Suits... That would be far too cynical a proposal for me, if not for message board loiterers who wondered why a win over Howard Eastman, a loss to Arthur Abraham and a win over Willie Gibbs qualify Miranda for a fast-track, HOV ride into the Hall...

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Hey, we're all hungry for the next generation of megatalents to announce themselves to us fight fans, and Miranda's backstory, fending for himself in Colombia as a boy, has already sent screenwriters to their computers to bang out a script...

But let's not lose ourself, and give in to an irrational exuberance.

What say we see if Miranda can finish the job against IBF titleholder Arthur Abraham before we slate Miranda to take on Jermain Taylor and Winky Wright on the same night?

Or, how about matching Miranda and the Derry Dynamo, the 27-year-old Irish transplant John Duddy, for the right to fight for Taylor's WBO strap?

I like Miranda's promise, but let's remember that before he sent Gibbs to the twilight zone, we all agreed that he isn't a polished product just yet. I mean, I'm on the Mirandamobile. I'm on the bandwagon, both feet, because he's got some thump in those knuckles, and who doesn't root for orphans? And not to mention Miranda has some charisma, which he exhibits with his creative trash talk (he handed Gibbs screws and such before their bout, to communicate that he'd need them to put together his scrambled brains after he got through with him).

But...while both my feet are planted, I'm not in the front seat with Max, riding shotgun.

Edison Miranda is a damned compelling prospect, with breakout potential as we head in to the New Year. But we need to see a little bit more of him before we get his plaque ready for Canastota.