A not so Holy alliance has been formed in Zurich, Switzerland and its sad ending will be realized this weekend. If you care to be a part of it, just shell out $24.95 on pay-per-view. If you'd like to make far better use of your disposable income try buying a turkey for the food pantry closest to you instead. Either way, you'll be buying a turkey but at least the latter will be good for somebody.

Saturday evening in Zurich (sounds romantic until you read on), 47-year-old Evander Holyfield will challenge 7-foot, 324 pound World Boxing Association heavyweight belt holder Nikolay Valuev for 1/4th of the heavyweight championship of the world. There is no point in such an exercise, either for Holyfield or Valuev, except perhaps to make a few dollars, emphasis on the word "few.''

If Holyfield wins, which he will not, it will serve only to prove how unworthy Valuev has been of holding the same title once claimed by Muhammad Ali twice in a career that has been more of a circus act than a boxing career. If Valuev wins, which he will, it will only prove that Holyfield is more deluded every day about what his Lord and Savior really wants him to do with the rest of his life…unless, of course, the idea is he dedicate it to showing the world what the word hubris really means.

Holyfield was once the gold standard for heavyweights, one of both the best and most courageous champions in boxing history. After first becoming the best cruiserweight there ever was in that long unfairly ignored division, Holyfield moved up to heavyweight despite howls of protest from many people who said he was too small to compete among boxing's redwoods.

All he accomplished was to win the title three times, stage three epic battles with Riddick Bowe, defeat Mike Tyson twice, George Foreman, Michael Moorer and nearly all the top heavyweights of his era before standing toe-to-toe for 24 rounds with Lennox Lewis. Once he fought him to a controversial draw and the second time he lost a decision and in both cases Holyfield was already well past his prime.

The latter is only important when one realizes those fights came nearly a DECADE ago. Since then Holyfield has gone 1-3-1 in title fights and 6-5-1 overall in a career that more and more has begun to make no sense.

That is certainly the case with this fight against a man a foot taller and 100 pounds heavier than Holyfield. It comes 14 months since he lost nearly every round to then WBO champion Sultan Ibragimov in Moscow, a momentarily crowned champion who will not be long remembered in boxing history.

Yet the well-faded Holyfield presses on, insisting it isn't about the money when it damn sure better be because if it isn't he shouldn't be sanctioned to fight for a world title he should be sent to a mental institution for observation.

“They’ve been calling me too old since I was 30,’’ Holyfield told an Associated Press reporter in Zurich Monday. “I never listened to them so why in the world would I get into that thinking now?’’

Maybe because you got beaten up by Ibragimov, lost in embarrassing fashion to guys like Larry Donald, Chris Byrd, James Toney and John Ruiz and haven’t won a title fight since being awarded a decision so controversial over eight years ago from Ruiz that the WBA ordered an immediate rematch, which you not only lost but led to you being driven to the floor by another heavyweight who will never be mistaken for a legend.

Holyfield remains the latter, despite his best efforts to besmirch his reputation in recent years. He is still a legend but he is one who is fast tarnishing his legacy by staying far too long in sport’s most dangerous occupation. Valuev (49-1, 34 KO) is certainly nothing of note, despite having twice won the WBA title, but he is enough to hold off what is left of Holyfield, which is what makes this all so sadly familiar.

Old champions who fight well past their prime because they need the money are nothing new in boxing. In fact, that story line is as much a staple of the sport as blood, gore and unconsciousness. All of those may be visited upon Holyfield Saturday night but what is more likely to happen is that he simply will end up being embarrassed by a lumbering guy who would never have lasted very long with him when he was still what his nickname once claimed he was when few people believed in him. He then was what he said he was. He was The Real Deal, but that was a long time ago.

Evander Holyfield is no longer that. He’s a bad deal who keeps pushing himself into rings where it seems almost inevitable something bad is going to happen, if it hasn’t already.

Monday he talked to that reporter of the doubters who said he couldn’t beat Tyson and wouldn’t avenge a loss to Moorer. What he doesn’t mention is those fights came a decade or more ago and he hasn’t had much good to talk about since. Saturday night doesn’t figure to be either.

Neurological damage doesn’t reveal itself for years after fighters retire but if anyone thinks a man can keep being hit in the head by 250-pound opponents without consequence forever, that person is kidding himself. Sadly, that person now appears to be Evander Holyfield.

“This is not to prove anything to anyone,’’ he said in Zurich. “I box because I’m skillful and I’m good and I love what I do.’’

While the first two are far from the truth any longer, the latter may well be but the sad fact of boxing is this – it’s a sport that doesn’t love you back.

No matter how much you give to it, no matter how high it lifts you at some point in your life, boxing is the cruelest lover. It will always turn its back on those who love it the most, leaving them with a broken heart at best and a broken head at the worst.

The best one can hope for Saturday night in Zurich is that all that is broken inside Evander Holyfield when the night is done is his heart.