

## Could Holyfield Pull A Hopkins?

Written by Michael Woods

Thursday, 18 December 2008 19:00

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Some of us were the slightest bit saddened to see Oscar De La Hoya rendered into a No Mas state of mind by Manny Pacquiao on Dec. 7.

Forlorn on his stool.

Hopeless and helpless.

Unable to answer his brain's call to respond to a younger, stronger, faster more able foe, De La Hoya was reduced to a state of being that he'd inflicted on more than a few of his foes on his rise up the ladder from Olympic hero to boxing megastar, the primary revenue driver and boldface name guaranteed to prompt a nod of recognition from even the most sweetscience-ignorant of sports fans. Of course, being of the understanding that Oscar had drunk from the chalice of victory more often than not, and was extraordinarily well compensated even when the chalice contained loser's brew, we didn't shed a tear for the Golden Boy. There, are, after all, too many people and situations that deserve the shedding of a tear and our pity than the momentary ill fortune plaguing one of sports' richest, most charismatic, most blessed competitors.

On Saturday, I fear I could see a similar situation play out, when Evander Holyfield, at age 46, may find himself hopeless and helpless and pummeled into a state that will force agents in his employ to do what he will be too stubborn and proud to do: wave the white flag. No, Nikolay Valuev isn't half the fighter Manny Pacquiao is, but when we consider the tired adage "styles make fights" we realize that Valuev's style, and more specifically, his freakish physique, will render Holyfield sadly ineffective against the 7-foot, 315 pound hitter. Holyfield's punchstat numbers against Valuev, who will outweigh him by one hundred pounds, could make Oscar's look positively robust in comparison.

Valuev will poke him with his jab, once, twice, three times, and follow with a right hand that will take more than a split second to arrive, but when it does, will bounce off Holyfield's head and leave behind vibrations that will rattle the old fella's brain. I think Holyfield could well land in the single digits, the low single digits, in every round that he is allowed to get off his stool, and guess that Valuev, who has inferior power for a heavyweight, may even be able to dish out enough abuse that Holyfield' corner might prohibit him from accepting more of it after about eight rounds.

Do I want my scenario to play out? I do not. Do I think there is a chance that Evander pulls a Hopkins, and engages in some science fiction tomfoolery, and pulls a time travel performance out of his butt? I do.

Slim. Like, post stomach stapling slim chance. I think it's distinctly possible that he takes maybe a round, maybe in the first or second, while his energy supply is topped off. But he was woeful against Sultan Ibragimov a year ago, and he ain't wine, getting better with time. Of course, the

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nutritional industry being what it is, could he have latched on to some super sensational supplement, like the stuff Lance Armstrong touts, that will enable him to mimic his 1988 self? Sure...we elected a black man President, fifty years after a black man wasn't allowed to use the same drinking fountain as a white man, in certain mega-ignorant pockets of the nation.

My man Johnny Bos is of the same mind as plenty of our supremely knowledgeable commenters, so that counts for something. Bos lays out why he thinks Holyfield could shock and amaze us.

"As crazy as it sounds, I give him a shot," Bos says. "He and Valuev are the same age and who the hell has Holyfield ever been afraid of? Yes, what makes you think Holyfield is ten years older than Valuev? Because they say so? Look at him, does Valuev look 35?"

But Bos, Holyfield looked shot against Ibragimov in his last scrap...

"Sultan Ibragimov would murder Valuev. Did you see the Bergeron fight? Valuev was lucky if he won three rounds. The only difference would be the amount of beatings Holyfield has taken, but he has had a long rest. If Holyfield was as good as he was against Oquendo or Sultan, look for a hard fight. If he looks like he did against Larry Donald or James Toney, good night Evander."

Ron Borges will write up the bout for us.