Written by Frank Lotierzo
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Well, it's just been announced that IBF/WBA/WBO/IBO and Ring Magazine heavyweight title holder Wladimir Klitschko 58-3 (51) will be defending his belts against Mariusz Wach 27-0 (15) of Poland this coming November 10th. And everyone, writers, fans and so called aficionados are admonishing Klitschko and referring to Wach as a stiff. My gut feeling to that is -- some observers are so lazy and say the most mundane and least thought out things they can possibly come up with.

Look, I've seen Wach's last three fights, against Kevin McBride, Jason Gavern and Tye Fields, and in those fights he looked a little ponderous and slow of hand and foot. However, he's a very

big man standing a little over 6'7", he throws straight punches and if he catches his opponent clean, at least with his right hand, he looks like he can do some damage. No, he's not a world beater, but aside from the Klitschkos, the heavyweight division is littered with B- fighters. So you can't blame Wladimir, because if not his brother Vitali, who could he fight that would really stimulate boxing fans?

If you look at Wladimir's last six opponents, Tony Thompson, Jean Marc Mormeck, David Haye, Samuel Peter, Eddie Chambers and Ruslan Chagaev, does Wach really look so inept? Thompson was over 40 years old, didn't posses any physical strength or power, not to mention his attack was about as vanilla as it gets. Mormeck was a dwarf next to Klitschko and had nothing in his arsenal to bother Wladimir with. David Haye fought like a church-mouse against Wladimir and just wanted to survive the fight. Samuel Peter was crude and without a clue and Eddie Chambers, who is a nice boxer, lacked the temperament and power to instill a scintilla of doubt in Wladimir. As for Chagaev, he showed some grit but in the end lacked the boxing skill and ability to deliver anything consequential enough to unnerve Wladimir.

If nothing else, Wach has something those challengers didn't have; he'll actually be looking down at Wladimir during the referee's instructions at ring center before the fight. And if you think that Wladimir hasn't noticed how McBride and Fields crumbled when Wach's right hand landed on their chins, you're not paying attention. One thing we know about Wladimir Klitschko is, he comes to the ring harboring some self doubt. Granted, neither McBride or Fields have a "Tex" Cobb like chin, but they're both big men weighing over 250 pounds and went down pretty hard when Wach nailed them cleanly.

As it's been said since Wladimir was last stopped by Corrie Sanders and Lamon Brewster eight years ago, his confidence can be shaken, and if you assert yourself against him, especially early, he'll leave you alone until he finds a crack in your constitution or battle plan. So based on those two little tidbits, is it such a reach to envision if Wach shows up and actually has an interest in how the fight turns out that he could present Wladimir with at least a little bit of a struggle and challenge?

For years we've had it forced down our throats how the biggest assets the Klitschkos have over the rest of the heavyweight field is their size. Well, Wach is bigger than Wladimir and I have a hunch that he believes in his power and will approach the fight with the mindset that from the first bell on he's no more than one punch away from taking Klitschko's confidence and winning the fight. In addition to that, he's undefeated. Of course that is mainly due to match-making and bringing a prospect along. However, that'll make him fight a little harder because a fighter's first defeat is the toughest to get on him.

Realistically, no, I can't pick Wach to upset Wladimir Klitschko on November 10th. But I'll tell you what, knowing that Wladimir will be tentative in the early going at least gives Mariusz Wach an opening to jump on him and give him something to think about besides his size disadvantage. As outstanding as Wladimir has looked since he last lost to Lamon Brewster, it's never out of the realm of possibility that Wladimir is no more than a big shot away from getting stopped or believing that he can be stopped by his opponent. Maybe he deserves more of the benefit of the doubt, but unfortunately, when a fighter has lost the way he did to Sanders and Brewster, it's a vision and thought that is always in the back of your mind when you watch him fight.

Wladimir's saving grace when he has wrestled with his self doubt is that he had an opponent in front of him who was unwilling to cut loose and let his hands go. Given the fact that Wach is bigger than Wladimir and seems to have implicit belief in his power, he may not follow the same "I'm glad to be here and looking to survive" approach that so many opponents have once they're in front of Klitschko.

Maybe Wach can't fight a lick and he really is a feather-fisted ox -- if that's the case, Wladimir should make quick work of him. On the other hand, if he can punch a little bit and asserts himself, he has as much of a chance to score the upset as did Thompson, Mormeck, Haye, Peter, Chambers and Chagaev?

Obviously, Wach's people don't think their guy can fight, based on their last three choices for opponents, but that's neither here nor there. The question is; why not this guy? It's not like Klitschko's recent opponents had any kind of shot at all. The only one who might have--Haye--was still a prohibitive underdog who was shaking in his boots the whole fight.

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Comment on this article

Radam G says:

Da iron-fisted Doc Wlad K is gonna beat da triple hebejeebeez outta dat long-chinned, softed, untested giant chump. Holla!

Mike D says:

You say, "Thompson didn't posses any physical strength or power."

Thompson's KO rate says you're wrong.

You say, "Mormeck was a dwarf next to Klitschko."

Mormeck was and is the size of a prime Mike Tyson and Mormeck is bigger than many heavyweight champs of the past.

You say, "David Haye fought like a church-mouse against Wladimir and just wanted to survive the fight."

David Haye attempted to leap in quickly to KO Wladimir from the opening round. Wladimir's quick feet nullified the tactic and sent Haye stumbling to the canvas from the opening bell. David Haye was nullified by Wladimir not his own lack of courage.

You say, "Samuel Peter was crude and without a clue."

Sam Peter was not so crude that he couldn't outbox hall of fame boxer James Toney twice, the second time clearly. That's the James Toney that outboxed hall of famer Evandar Holyfield.

You say, "Eddie Chambers, who is a nice boxer, lacked the temperament and power to instill a scintilla of doubt in Wladimir."

Eddie Chambers attempted to instill doubt in Wladimir from the opening round as evidenced by his wrestling Wladimir to the canvas from the opening bell. Chambers came to fight, but he tasted Wladimir's power early and that is what made him more cautious.

deepwater says:

That guy has a huge chin. I rather watch larry holmes jump over a car and tackle trevor burbick on youtube over and over then watch this nonsense. who cares who wins this nonsense.

mortcola says:

Mike D, you nailed it in one way: even knowledgeable boxing people, unable to get excited by the Klitschkos, focus on the lousiness of the opposition, and a mysterious something that keeps nearly anyone from doing anything successful in the ring against them. I'll say it again - he may not be exciting, and his moves may not have much superficial thrill factor, but the guy commands pace and space as well as anyone at this weight in at least one whole generation. These other boxers are competitive against each other, a guy like Chambers is arguably as skilled a boxer as anyone out there, but it is subtle, disciplined skill and focus that keeps anyone from implementing their own game against a Klitschko. Yes, they are that good. Boring, maybe. But those little shifts of distance and angle, those change-up jabs followed by occasional steel

hammers, plus sheer size and strength, make them too damn good for this generation, and for most. We'll see if Wlad's anxiety returns, and if the chin holds up - but for many years now, the guy has simply ruled the ring. His brother too, though with shaky one-armed moments against Chisora, at age 40. Now let the jokes fly (you there, Deepwater?). I still stand by my opinion.

GANZ says:

The letter should be sent now

Dear MR W. Klitschos the IBF/WBA/WBO/IBO and Ring Magazine have made a MR. V Klitschos #1 and you will need to fight him with in the next 6 months or be stripped of you titles. Send the same to the Brother.