Undefeated middleweight contender and alphabet titlist Gennady Golovkin (24-0, 21 KOs) has become an almost mythical figure in the sport today, and he's done it without really having yet beaten top level opposition. Saturday Night Boxing's Adam Abramowitz told me recently it wasn't for lack of trying on Team Golovkin's part. They want fights against other top

middleweight contenders, he says, but no one wants to fight him.

“Quillin, Sturm, Geale, N'Dam and Macklin have all been offered fights with Golovkin in the past six months,” said Abramowitz.

Enter opportunistic junior middleweight contender Gabriel Rosado (21-5, 13 KOs). Unlike the larger and more well-known group of fighters who’ve passed up a chance to step in the ring with Golovkin, Rosado accepted the challenge almost as soon as it was offered him. Sure, the talented 26-year-old Philadelphian has had his ups and downs, but a string of well ballyhooed (and televised) successes has catapulted into the spotlight. He’s won seven straight since his last loss, a majority decision over Derek Ennis in 2010, with his last three perhaps his finest to date.

Rosado began 2012 with an impressive stoppage over tough veteran Jesus Soto Karass last January to help kick off NBC’s new Fight Night Series. Rosado was brilliant, using sharp reflexes and fast hands to batter Soto Karass to the head and body for all five rounds it lasted. Rosado followed it up twice more. In June, he dispatched of Sechew Powell in nine rounds then finished the year with a ten round stoppage of Charles Whitaker in September, earning a top ten ranking in perhaps the sport’s most talent-laden division.

Is this the guy to derail the Golovkin Express? Critics have their doubts, but Rosado sure thinks so.

“Everybody is looking at this guy like he’s the next best thing,” Rosado told The Sweet Science. “I like the challenge. I’m a competitor. I feel like I have the skills and what it takes to beat him.”

Many fight fans have lauded Rosado’s decision to reject the 158 pound catchweight proposal negotiated for him by advisor Russell Peltz. Others have called it suicide. Rosado simply calls it a matter of respect.

"Golovkin is the champion and out of respect to him and towards the sport of boxing, we will

fight at the middleweight limit of 160 pounds," said Rosado via press release last week. "When I beat him, I don't want any excuses about the extra two pounds he had to lose. I will beat him at his best, fair and square."

Rosado says he's a new school fighter with an old school mentality.

"The old-timers didn't need any catchweights, they were real men. Middleweight champions fight at 160 and that's what I want."

Sentiments such as these are sure to win fight fans over, for we are a demanding lot. In fact, one could argue this was precisely the reason the press release went out in the first place. But does Rosado really want to rumble with perhaps the scariest middleweight on the planet, at his best and most natural weight to boot? Isn't that needlessly heading into the lion's den when he could fight him somewhere else instead?

"I just feel that a catchweight is a way of giving up…it's a weakness," Rosado said. "If you're going to fight a guy for his title, you should honor the weight class and respect the sport. That is why there are weight classes. It doesn't make sense to make him come down. I don't need the catchweight. I want to beat him fair and square."

The Ring's Ryan Songalia told me what it really boils down to is economics, and maybe he has a point.

"Some guys just don't have a lot of options, and any opportunity to fight on HBO is lucrative," Songalia said. "It wasn't like Rosado could wait around and get his own HBO date. That's why he's leaving his best [and most] natural weight class for [the fight]."

Indeed, Rosado said he is quite looking forward to appearing on HBO as well as tussling with Golovkin in New York in boxing's most famous venue, Madison Square Garden. He says it will be a dream come true on both accounts.

“I remember seeing guys like Felix Trinidad and Miguel Cotto fight there and daydreaming about me one day fighting at the Garden on HBO,” he said. “It’s perfect.”

In boxing, though, dreams can quickly turn into nightmares. Most pundits are picking the larger, heavier-handed Golovkin to continue his menacing ways come January 19 in New York. He’s simply too big, too strong and too skilled, they argue, but Rosado remains undeterred. In fact, when asked if he was anxious about testing himself against the naturally larger man’s power, Rosado talked only of preparedness.

“I’m not anxious,” he asserted. “I’m ready.”

Rosado insists he will shock the world against Golovkin. He mentioned the value of traveling the tough road up the boxing ranks, where he experienced five losses, and how it can make the right kind of resilient person a winner in the end. He says he feels as if he’s finally at his very best and that now he’s ready to prove it.

“I think with this win, I will show people I am a different fighter,” he said. “A lot people still think about the Angulo [loss], the Guerrero [loss]…they still think I am that same fighter. Once I beat Golovkin, they’re going to realize I’m a different fighter now. It takes years for a fighter to learn his craft. Those fights were almost four years ago. Everything is on point.”

As our discussion winded down, I noticed a quiet confidence in his voice. It’s an admirable quality, really, especially considering he’s fighting one of the more intimidating figures in the sport today, and moving up in weight to do it. In my discussion with boxing writer Jimmy Tobin on the matter, though, he warned me against overly praising the fighter for simply doing what a fighter should do.

“Rosado is taking the biggest fight he can get,” he said. “That's what it's about, and commendable. But it doesn't warrant apotheosis.”

I have to admit, while I certainly agree with Tobin in principle on the matter, it certainly warrants something or other…doesn’t it? I mean, we are so quick to judge fighters for the opposite of

what he's doing, don't we? I know I have.

So whatever that something may be…money…fame…respect…adulation…*whatever*, let's hope Rosado finds it waiting for him in the ring alongside what most certainly will be on that evening, Gennady Golovkin.

Comment on this article

brownsugar says:

Rosado talks like a fighter walks like a fighter and boxes like a figher... Can't take nothin from him...
Good thing this is only a sport and not some Mad Max style post apocalyptic fight to the death,..Rosado,..... he'll wake up with his friends the next morning and life can go on. Rosado will learn and make the necessary adjustments. I want to personally thank him in advance for the intertainment value he brings to this fight... a decent enough opponent seeing that everybody else is moving as far from GGG as they possibly can. GGG might have to challenge Froch, or Adonis Stevenson to get somebody to share the ring with him after this fight.

Carmine Cas says:

Hey if it weren't for catchweights Pacquiao would only be 6 division champ! Props to Rosado, this is what we need more in boxing.

the Roast says:

I like Rosado's attitude and I wish him luck with GGG. I'm not ready to elevate GGG to elite until I see more.

amayseng says:

@brownsugar

good post

riverside says:

[QUOTE=brownsugar;24398]Rosado talks like a fighter walks like a fighter and boxes like a figher... Can't take nothin from him...
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the intertainment value he brings to this fight... a decent enough opponent seeing that everybody else is moving as far from GGG as they possibly can. GGG might have to challenge Froch, or Adonis Stevenson to get somebody to share the ring with him after this fight.[/QUOTE]

B-Sug, Ur expectations are really high on this guy,You think he would do good against Froch? GGG resume is worst than Chavez JR, he has looked espectacular in his recent fights, most of those fighters are B minus fighters just saying, what do you think?

DaveB says:

It is strange but also understandable why GGG is so highly rated, possibly overrated - he is undefeated and has very heavy hands. Those guys are always given more props than they deserve. That is until the time when they get their heads handed to them and at some point they usually do because some slick boxer comes along that doesn't fold and we find their skills are lacking. Is this guy the real deal? We need more proof at this point. He is highly entertaining up until now. He will most likely get the win in this one. Moving to 168 is probably a bad idea.

Radam G says:

Nice, DaveG -- I mean DaveB ! Ditto that 150%. Holla!

brownsugar says:

What's up DaveB, Riverside? So glad you gentleman decided to weigh-in... I know I have the largest GGG flavored natural lemonade stand on the TSS... But even more so than up and comers like Broner, ...for instance, GGG's willingness to throw down the gauntlet within 2 weight divisisions without restriction or stipulation is unprecidented in the sport. Not since the days of Hagler and Duran, have we seen middleweights willing to challenge themselves to the extent of GGG. ....and possess the skills to back it up. ... I'd very much like to hear your appraisal after the fight... if I'm wrong then I stand corrected by the best of the TSS. If not then prepare to continue to be amazed by GGG.

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B-Sug, GGG will most likely destroy Rosado and will get partial credit? graduating from Jr High. He reminds me of David lemiuex and Maidana real crude! . I'd like to see him fight Rubio At 160 Kirkland or Angulo at 154. Kelly Pavlik should jump in and challenge him for beer money, GGG

will most likely fold when Pavlik hits him with the over hand right. we shall see!

brownsugar says:

Riverside.... you put a smile on my face today with that post..And I don't get the opportunity to smile that often.. appreciate the honesty.. I hope your still just as honest next week. ...Enjoy the fight.

DaveB says:

B-Sug, We're not putting you down. It is good you're standing behind your guy in the public court of opinion. Fighters come along, they're strong and ready to get it on. They do very well against the limited opposition that we've seen, and I've been guilty of it too as much as anyone else, people start a band wagon. As they garner more attention and fight different opposition you (I) find we jumped too soon. Right now I like what I see but I find that offensive fighters get more highly rated than they should. Yeah some guys like Duran are the real deals. Duran was actually a more gifted defensive fighter than he was ever given credit for. I need more proof for this guy and there is nothing wrong with that. I remember when Pavlik came on the scene and Arum said he was better than Marvelous Marvin Hagler and people actually started a discussion on that. I like the fact that he is willing to take on all comers. I just need to see more fights than the on that will happen next week, unless he gets tested which I don't think will happen. Maybe later this year he will though. If I see proof over a longer run make room on the band wagon because I'll need to elbow my way in.

brownsugar says:

I'm not offended at all DaveB , I actually like hearing the opposing opinions and would be disappointed if someone didn't have another viewpoint. That's why I'm smiling...I had to work today and I peaked in during my break to find some valid concerns about GGG. IT's not like I want or need GGG to be that good.. or have a vested interest in his success. I just think he's going to emerge as a top name attraction in 2013. With the former stars (PAC/Floyd) on their way out it's fun to see the next wave of fighters fill in those huge pairs off Shoes. I think GGG will be one of those guys.

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B-Sug, what is your input on Salido vs Mikey Garcia?

DaveB says:

Spoken like the true gentleman and professional you are. Congrats on getting the ROTY award again. This is probably getting to be old hat to you. Respectfully I hope you are right and that GGG is one of the emerging stars. He brings a lot of the excitement the sport needs. Khan did too. Khan has the star quality but couldn't handle the pressure of being a top fighter. I hope GGG brings it. I'm definitely rooting for him. Always good to have a new star. Will he be one of them? Will Broner? It was great to see Andre Ward emerge. Absolutely new stars are a good thing. In truth you can never have too many. The more the merrier.

Radam G says:

Mickey G by decision or mid-to-late round kayo is what I see. Speaking for me. Holla!

riverside says:

[QUOTE=Radam G;24510]Mickey G by decision or mid-to-late round kayo is what I see. Speaking for me. Holla![/QUOTE]

RG, that's how I'm thinking that fight will turn out to be. You know Mikey's chin has never been really tested. Papa Garcia and Robert working with Mikey, thats Tons of long in the tooth. Mikey is very well disciplined and well schooled in the boxing IQ. He should be able to put a clinic next weekend and bring the title to the IE, unless he gets caught and KO., Salido is very capable a putting Mikey to seep.

brownsugar says:

Thanks DaveB.....@Riverside.... Salido can be wild and unorthodox at times, but so much desire. ...he stuck around late in the Gambia fight even though he was outgunned 3 to one. And had some good moments. Garcia is patient and fights a very systematic fight..throwing percentage shots until they land(hard). It's a great matchup, Salido isn't gonna pack it in that easy. Give me Garcia by majority or split D. (Unless age has suddenly caught up to Salido).

Radam G says:

Nope! Mikey G is indeed well schooled, has incredible boxing savvy and a boxing IQ. Dude

know the game by the book, hook and shook. He's such an honest fighter, that he's not yet a crook. He's going to give another honest beatdown. He will cause Salido to have the tears of a clown. Holla!

brownsugar says:

nicely done RG,.. I wouldn't rule out that result either. I don't have a lasting impression of Garcia because he's so disciplined.. does what's necessary to win and rarely deviates from his plan.....it's hard to tell how good he is. We're about to find out.

Radam G says:

Agreed upon that! Holla!