

Wladimir #Klitschko Guns For 60 Wins

Written by Kelsey McCarson
Saturday, 04 May 2013 06:17



It seems to be going unnoticed, but Wladimir Klitschko (59-3, 50 KOs) will be aiming for his 60th today in his heavyweight title defense (WBA, WBO, IBF, IBO and RING) against Francesco Pianeta (28-0-1, 15 KOs). Should he emerge victorious on EPIX as expected (Pianeta is one of the champ's former sparring partners and has exactly 0 notable wins on his ledger),

[Big Bad Wlad](#)

will further solidify his status as one of the most successful heavyweight crown wearers in the history of the sport.

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In fact, of the dozen notable accomplishers of such a feat (i.e. amassing 60 or more wins and winning at least a portion of the heavyweight championship), our man Klitschko compares quite favorably to the best of the best.

The standard bearer for the crew, Joe Louis (66-3, 52 KOs), was a remarkable 58-1 after he defeated Jersey Joe Walcott in June of 1948. The Brown Bomber announced his retirement from boxing in March of the very next year, but made his way back into the ring in late 1950 against new heavyweight king, Ezzard Charles. Louis was too old to beat The Cincinnati Cobra. He lost a 15-round UD to the slick boxer, but won 8 in a row until his TKO loss to Rocky Marciano in 1951, his last fight as a professional.

Perhaps equally impressive was George Foreman (76-5-1, 68 KOs). The menacing slugger was 45-2 after his surprise loss to Jimmy Young in 1977. Big George had seen enough and retired. Ten years later, though, the big fellow returned to the ring a new man. He won 21 fights in a row to earn himself a shot at linear champion Evander Holyfield in 1991. The old man put up a heck of a fight, but Holyfield outworked him for the decision. Undeterred, Foreman worked his way back into title contention by 1994 and shocked champ Michael Moorer to become heavyweight champion at age 45, a record that still stands among heavyweights. Foreman fought for 3 more years, retiring after a MD loss to Shannon Briggs in 1997.

Not to be outdone, Larry Holmes (69-6, 44 KOs) staved off the completion for his version of the heavyweight title for almost 7 years in the late 70s and early 80s. Sporting perhaps the best jab in the history of the division, Holmes out-fought numerous notable contenders, including Ken Norton, Earnie Shavers and Tim Witherspoon, to run his record to 48-0, one short of Rocky Marciano's achievement. Superstar light heavyweight Michael Spinks out-pointed the champ twice though, so he soured on boxing until he was obliterated by Mike Tyson in 1988 in just 4 rounds. Despite it, Holmes stayed relevant after, and even challenged for a heavyweight title belt twice more before hanging up the gloves in 2002.

Golden age rivals Jack Dempsey (61-6-9, 50 KOs) and Gene Tunney (65-1-1, 48 KOs) both accomplished the feat, despite neither man defending the title more than a handful of times between them. Dempsey had collected 54 wins for himself after he annihilated the giant Jess Willard in 1919 to seize the heavyweight throne. He defended it 6 times and reached the magic number of 60 in a barnburner against Luis Angel Firpo, a fight that featured 11 total knockdowns. Dempsey lost the crown to Tunney in 1926, then fought twice more before calling it a career. Meanwhile, Tunney won the majority of his share at light heavyweight. By the time he out-boxed Dempsey for the heavyweight title, The Fighting Marine was already a member of the 60 win club, having amassed 62 wins in 64 fights.

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Of the other upper echelon heavyweight champions, Jack Johnson (77-13-14, 48 KOs) and Ezzard Charles (93-25-1, 52 KOs) accomplished the same achievement, though both also amassed a double digit loss total.

So does winning 60 prizefights and being heavyweight champion of the world mean Wladimir Klitschko is great? Not quite. Running the numbers is one factor alone. After all, sluggish giant Primo Carnera (88-14, 71 KOs) made the grade as well, and no one considers him even a top 20 heavyweight.

But fight fans and historians should take notice of the younger Klitschko brother and his ever growing status among the all-time greats. Since grabbing the IBF and IBO title straps in 2006 against Chris Byrd, Wladimir has proven to be the best heavyweight in the world. He's unified every belt he can save the WBC version his brother owns, and while his refusal to trade punches with Vitali [keeps him from being the linear TBRB champion](#), it shouldn't keep him (and big brother for that matter) from being considered among the very best heavyweights to ever lace up gloves.

Klitschko's plan is to finish his career doing something that's never been done and compete in the 2016 Olympic Games. The 1996 gold medal winner seeks to hold on to his professional title belts only until then, giving him a likely total of no more than 5-6 more pro bouts left to fight at the most.

If he has it his way, if he retires the heavyweight champion, if he meets or exceeds Joe Louis' 66-3 mark, and if he caps it all off by bookending his impressive professional career with another gold medal at the Olympics....well, the numbers don't always tell the whole story, but they don't lie neither. If he does all that, Wladimir Klitschko will be the greatest heavyweight boxer in the history of the sport.

In Case You Were Wondering

Other notable champs with 60 or more wins include Max Baer (66-13, 51 KOs) and Lee Savold (97-38-3, 72 KOs), who might have the coolest alias of all the fighters in the club: "The Boxing

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Bartender.” Muhammad Ali (56-5, 37 KOs) might be “The Greatest,” but didn’t quite get there. Neither did Max Schmeling (56-10-4, 40 KOs) or Floyd Patterson (55-8-1, 40 KOs).

Three 80s alphabet belt winners Greg Page (58-17-1, 48 KOs), Tony Tucker (57-7, 47 KOs) and Tim Witherspoon (55-13-1, 38 KOs) came close, and notable 90s heavyweight Oliver McCall (56-12, 37 KOs) finished his career just 4 wins short.

A note: career records of fighters, especially those who competed before 1950, are often difficult to track. Historians may not completely agree to the records of some of the fighters listed above. Nonetheless, BoxRec.com was used as the authority of record.

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ali says:

Even though the heavyweight division suck getting 60 win is pretty impressive.