

Gennady Golovkin Has Officially Arrived

Written by Frank Lotierzo
Monday, 01 July 2013 09:06



Nothing excites boxing fans like a puncher, I mean a genuine life-taker. When a fighter is a knockout artist, no fighter or style looks more unbeatable. Think of some of the big fights over the last 50 years where a big puncher was involved, nine out of 10 times the puncher was favored over the smooth and skilled boxer. Sonny Liston was favored over both Floyd Patterson and Cassius Clay/Muhammad Ali in both fights against them. Joe Frazier was favored over Ali (although Ali's inactivity played a role in that one) the first time they fought and so was George Foreman over Ali the only time they met. Thomas Hearns was a slight favorite with most of the Vegas books over Sugar Ray Leonard in their first fight. Felix Trinidad was a knockout artist and

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was a 2.5 to 1 favorite over Bernard Hopkins and despite getting knocked out by Evander Holyfield in their first fight, Mike Tyson was favored over Evander before their rematch.

Enter Gennady Golovkin 27-0 (24), who just scored his most impressive win on Saturday night. Golovkin knocked out Matthew Macklin 29-5 (20) in the third round with a short left hook to the body. One punch knockouts to the body are the rarest knockout you'll see in boxing. Just a little over a year ago Macklin knocked down the consensus best middleweight in the world, Sergio Martinez, in the seventh round before not being able to come out for the 12th and final round of their title bout. Based on Macklin, which is not always an accurate read, Golovkin would be the betting favorite over Martinez if they meet in the near future.

As to Golovkin the fighter, he's the real deal and an authentically terrific natural puncher with both hands. And the man who is best qualified to speak to Gennady's power, Matthew Macklin, says every punch he touches you with hurts, regardless whether it's a jab, cross, hook or uppercut. If those weapons don't make him dangerous, he is one of the rare punchers who jabs his way in and sets up his power. In other words Golovkin can be counted on to deliver his power every time out, something that makes him really dangerous. Although Mike Tyson used his jab occasionally, he couldn't jab from the outside the way Golovkin has shown that he's capable of doing. However, what made Tyson so dangerous was the fact that he never once met an opponent who didn't have to stand up to his Sunday best, win or lose. And if you've followed boxing for awhile you know that cannot be said about many past previous knockout punchers, the likes of say, Earnie Shavers and Julian Jackson. Sure, they delivered their power an overwhelming majority of the time, but they had nights where they managed to never quite land their bread and butter hook or right hand. Whereas Golovkin is more Tyson-esque in that to beat him you're going to have to withstand his best artillery and then have enough left to come back with.

There are two things that he has shown to date in which he surpasses Tyson, at least based on the opposition he's fought throughout his first 27 bouts. One of them is he seems to maintain and carry his power the whole night. Mike was faster out of the gate but after three rounds slowed and didn't carry one punch power the way Golovkin has shown. The other thing that you can't help but notice about Gennady is, he doesn't get discouraged or deterred. Nothing seems to bother him or make him do what he doesn't want to. Tyson had lulls during some of his fights even during the Rooney days where he looked a little discouraged and was trying to figure his way through the fight before coming alive and regaining his confidence after landing a big shot and forcing his opponent to back off.

One also has to be impressed to date with the way Gennady has shown that he can cut off the

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ring and force his opponents to basically fight him off more than fight him. With the threat of Golovkin's power and the somewhat sustained pressure he was putting on Macklin, Matthew was forced to rush his offense. He was so much more intent on putting something in Golovkin's face to occupy and disrupt him, that unless he walked into something, he had no chance to hurt Gennady or make him pay for bringing the fight. When a fighter is faced with the thought that he has to throw in volume to keep himself above water, the way Macklin was versus Golovkin, it drains them both mentally and physically. And since Macklin was being forced to hurry his offense with the hopes of impeding Golovkin just enough so he could get away enough so he could try and figure something out, Golovkin was doing whatever he wanted and basically as he said after the fight had his way and an easy time of it.

Right now it looks as if the sport of professional boxing has found a fighter it can take an interest in and look forward to watching fight. Knockout punchers aren't created or molded, they're born. Golovkin has a deep amateur background and you can see that he's improving and becoming more dangerous every time he fights. His confidence seems to be escalating as well and you can sense that he believes it's just a matter of time before he tracks his man down and nails him with precisely placed power shots to the head and body regardless of what strategy they employ against him. He doesn't rush in trying to create openings, he goes about it in a more methodical and measured fashion.

As far as his vulnerabilities, he's not the fastest fighter of hand or foot that you'll see, but he seems to cover a lot of ground in the ring quickly when he's fighting as the predator, and when he lands with one good clean shot he's shown that he can put a successive combination together of finishing punches. Also, he's shown that he's a little easier to hold off if you circle and move to his right as Kassim Ouma did a couple years ago. Then again he's improved a lot since then and may not be quite as befuddled by that type of movement now.

There's a lot to be said about Golovkin in a positive vein, but at the same time there's a lot to find out. He looks really good and may be around for a while, but we need to see how he reacts when things don't go his way or is confronted by a tough fighter who can stand up to his punch. And yes that'll happen, it always does. There are a ton of interesting fights for him to be made and it looks as if he's willing to take them. All punchers think they're invincible and believe their punch will always carry the day until it doesn't. He's a marquee attraction and that's what boxing needs. However, he's not a particularly big middleweight and shouldn't be challenging the top super-middleweights yet.

And please HBO, don't listen to whoever said during the broadcast (Max Kellerman or Jim Lampley) to try and make Andre Ward versus Golovkin. Can you imagine wanting to destroy

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one of your marquee fighters just so you can look like "a smart boxing guy?" Golovkin is something to see but you couldn't invent a fighter more perfect for Ward. And Ward would beat him in a way that would showcase all of Golovkin's liabilities without revealing any of his assets.

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Spinach Chin says:

2013 is the year of the puncher! Mathysse, Stevenson, Mikey Garcia, Golovkin...let the bodies hit the floor.

Matthew says:

Golovkin is must-see TV. There is so much to like about him. He has an educated jab, his footwork is excellent, he goes to the body well (as we just saw), he's an active fighter, and oh yeah, he hits like a ton of bricks. I'm really impressed with his calm and patient demeanor, and I respect the fact that he's really working on his English. I would not, however, pick him to beat Ward if that fight is eventually made. Any talk of him going up to 168 is very premature, as he's not exactly a big middleweight to begin with. Whether he gets a shot at Martinez or not (probably not, based on DiBella's postfight comments), he will be the man at 160. There are good fights to be made there, and he should stay and clean out the division.

Radam G says:

I can do nothing but to agree to Superscribe F-Lo's spit. Three-g is a coming. And staying at 160lbs, I'm riding shotgun with Matthew. Holla!

amayseng says:

Don't forget who is driving this band wagon when all you hated on me!

I've stick with my dude ggg.

I saw something in him early.

And am driving this wagon either to the top or off a cliff wherever

ggg takes it.

I'm loyal

FRANK M says:

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Golovkin as a tremendous puncher, he stays in great shape, appears durable and I think is an over-all outstanding fighter. The thing that makes these aforementioned attributes particularly impressive is that he truly believes in himself. He is not a front runner. I liken him to Chavez Sr., not Tyson. Tyson never struck me as totally self confident. Golovkin is. Golovkin has a Rocky Marciano/ Carmen Basilio confidence and work ethic. The invisible quality of a fighter is what goes on in their head. Golovkin never questions himself. That is a quality you can't train a fighter to have. In approx 350 amateur fights, he only had (5) losses. As a pro he is 27-0 with 24 KO's and now has 14 KO's in a row. One might say yeah!, but who has he beaten. The answer is not only everybody he ever faced as a pro, but how impressively he has beaten them. Golovkin is the full package AND he a likable type.