

## CAUTION: Golovkin Remains A Mystery Still

Written by Ron Borges  
Monday, 01 July 2013 13:27

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Saturday night Gennady Golovkin proved what we already knew. What he did not prove is whether he is the best middleweight in the world.

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The undefeated WBA-IBO champion's punching power was never in question. When you have the highest knockout percentage of any active world champion as well as the highest in middleweight championship history it doesn't matter whether you've knocked out the top names in the division, which he has not.

Power is power and if you've got the kind Golovkin has it's obvious, as it was when he dropped challenger Matthew Macklin with a savage left to the liver that crumpled him to the floor in a heap at 1:22 of the third round, unable to get up for several minutes after he was counted out by referee Eddie Cotton.

But the truth is the man Golovkin beat was already beaten before he entered the ring. For more than a week Macklin kept talking about how he hadn't really wanted the fight yet, insisting he needed one more tune-up before facing Golovkin, even though this was Macklin's third shot at the middleweight title.

That is a man who doesn't want to be where he ended up, which was trapped inside the ropes with Golovkin patiently boring in on him like termites in the woodwork.

After talking a good game until the week before the fight, Macklin (29-5, 20 KO) entered the ring at the MGM Grand Theatre filled with self-doubt. His movements from the beginning were skitterish, his feet seldom set to punch, his eyes darting here and there, his worry obvious.

That, of course, is the curse of the big puncher. It has benefited fighters for decades. It is a spell of fear that comes over an opponent that ends the fight before it begins, rendering that opponent incapable of the kind of calm patience necessary to do his job.

Most observers miss this nuance, seeing only the explosion and assuming the sole cause is the unbeatable devastation of the knockout artist. But fighters, especially champions, know differently.

The best of them see deeper things. They see the eyes of the opponent and know what it means. They see the weaknesses of the champion and know how to expose and exploit them.

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That is why Gennady Golovkin's performance Saturday night, impressive as it was, did not satisfy all the skeptics in the crowd. It made clear to them, not that they had any doubt, that he has dynamite in both hands but it did not quite convince them yet that he will detonate it no matter who the competition is.

"People talk about punching power," said Andre Ward, the undisputed super middleweight champion and an analyst working at ringside Saturday night for HBO.

"He is always in position to punch. It's from that Soviet (amateur system, where he was allegedly 350-5 before turning pro). He has a strong base, strong foundation. He puts a lot of pressure on people, and it starts with his feet. He gets into position, then is able to unload the big shot."

And then came the "but."

"Until somebody is able to dominate (Sergio) Martinez, he's in that top spot (in the middleweight division)," Ward said after the fight. "He's struggled his last couple of fights but he holds onto that top spot.

"I don't know what's going on with negotiations behind the scenes with Golovkin. They say that nobody wants to fight him. He's doing this (knocking out guys), but not the top competition so I'll keep Martinez in the top spot.

"I'd like to see Golovkin against a young fighter like Kid Chocolate (Peter Quillin). If he can do that against a fighter like that you can say he's a top spot (guy)."

Ward made clear without saying it that he has no fear and no doubt what would happen if all the talk of Golovkin moving up to 168 in pursuit of him came to fruition. In his mind it would be Golovkin's first true test at the highest level of the sport and he would not pass it.

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For all his toughness, Macklin lost a disputed decision he probably deserved over Felix Sturm, was stopped by Martinez after 11 rounds in which Macklin dropped Martinez early but ended up taking a beating and now was non-competitive against Golovkin. In other words, and there's no disrespect meant by this but he is not a top level talent.

Even Macklin's trainer, former world champion Buddy McGirt, did not seem as impressed as you might have expected, in part because he knew before the fight what became obvious as Macklin walked into the ring with the look of someone staring at a hangman's noose with his name on it.

"He has the power, you can't take that away from him," McGirt said after the fight, "but I'd still like to see him in a dogfight against a boxer who can punch. He's in an era where there are no great middleweights. That's not his fault but it takes a little shine off him. I still think he hasn't been tested.

"The best fighters are patient fighters. They stay calm under pressure. Matthew got caught with a shot because he felt Golovkin was getting the momentum and he had to *do* something. He got anxious."

Not without good reason. After quickly stopping Macklin, Golovkin is now on a streak of 14 straight KOs and takes the approach that one of the inevitable things in life is that he will render his opponent unconscious sooner rather than the later, an opinion not surprisingly also held by his trainer, the very able Abel Sanchez.

"He's an animal in the ring when he's right," Sanchez said. "He's the best fighter I ever trained. From 154 pounds to 168 pounds no one can stand up to his power."

Such a person, of course, has never existed. No one could stand up to Jack Dempsey until Gene Tunney did...twice. No one could stand up to Mike Tyson until Buster Douglas did. No one could stand up to Thomas Hearns or Sonny Liston or The Great John L. or every big puncher there ever was...until somebody did. The only one who can say no one did is Rocky Marciano because, well, no one did, although truth be told he fought in an era not unlike the

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follow one Golovkin is in now.

Whether Golovkin's somebody is presently in the middleweight division remains to be seen but for all his glorification over the weekend, he remains a mystery, as even he seemed to inadvertently hint at after the fight.

"I expected a tougher fight," Golovkin (27-0, 24 KO) admitted. "I gave him a good opportunity early in the fight to see what he had. When he didn't take it I knew it would be an easy fight.

"The left hand (to the body) is something we worked on in the gym. When I saw he was open for it, I drilled him with it. I knew he wasn't going to get up."

All true. Equally true was that Macklin was halfway to the floor before he left his dressing room. That is not to hint he was a coward because he was not. He was just an opponent who didn't believe he could win and when that is the case you seldom do and against a guy like Golovkin you never do.

But the biggest names in the division, guys like Martinez, Quillin and Julio Cesar Chavez, Jr., as well as Ward at 168, will not leave their dressing room with such a deficit of mind.

They will carry with them the serenity of the great fighter, the kind Golovkin (27-0, 24 KO) clearly possessed against Macklin and all his other opponents. It is the serenity of faith in yourself and your gifts but also faith in your will as well as your skill.

It is a faith Golovkin has but a faith that has not yet been tested. Only then will we learn if he is to join names like Hagler, Monzon, Hopkins, Greb, Ketchel, Robinson and the few other truly great middleweight champions.

For now he is a 31-year-old fighter with a big punch that is serving him well and rightly exciting boxing fans and the sport. He is on his way to bigger challenges.

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If he passes them Gennady Golovkin will be what people say he is but words alone will not make it so. It's a funny thing about greatness in boxing. It's something you have to prove against people who already have established their own.

Those kind of fighters, and there are not many of them these days, are different from the Macklins and the Gabriel Rosados and Nobuhiro Ishidas of the world. They have what you have and it's more than a punch.

Until Gennady Golovkin gets the opportunity to test himself in that hot cauldron we wait to see if he is what he says he is or if he's just another guy who could punch holes in guys like Matthew Macklin even before he hit them.

[Comment on this article](#)

### **Radam G says:**

Nice, fair piece. But Buddy McGirt is full of syet. In his own era, some said that there were not any great welterweights, because jealous muthacrimbs were "Sweet Pea" Whitaker hating.

Buddy was probably just angry because he didn't get a chance to holla his famous slogan: "I'm stopping it, baby! Holla!

### **amayseng says:**

Radian he probably hollers that in his sleep!

### **Matthew says:**

I always chuckle when I think of McGirt uttering that line. Looking at him now, I often wonder how in the hell he fought at 140 and 147 lbs. As for GolovkinI too want to see how he responds when he is tested. We have seen him hit on the chin a few times, so I suspect he has some pretty good whiskers. Golovkin is far from a finished product, and has not really faced an elite fighter, but I suspect excuses will come up even if he beats Geale or Quillin. While Martinez still rightly holds the distinction of being middleweight champion, I would pick Golovkin to beat him or anyone else in the division right now.

### **brownsugar says:**

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I can say without reservation or apology that GGG is just as much the RealDeal that SugarRay Leonard, Roy Jones, and Pernell Whitaker were expected to become when they emerged from the Olympic Games ...flagswaving ...firecrackers popping....and Red White&Blue Sparklers sparkling with the expectation of every Sports announcer, journalist and pundit resting upon each and every fighters preordained fate to blaze a path of glory all the way to the pinnacle of the sport.

Each candidate had the same ingredients....

An outstanding amateur career.

Outstanding physical conditioning.

Outstanding genetics whether its in the form of some manifestation/combination of hyper-reflexes, preternatural strength and stamina, exceptional ring generalship and/or a good chin.

Including various intangibles..such as an insatiable ego or an indomitable spirit.

If amateur boxing was still televised on network TV no one would be hypothesizing about GGG'S Potential. Or making ridiculous comparisons between GGG and guys who merely hit hard. He would have entered the pros with an existing fan base.

GGG's expertise of the sweet science is tantamount to the skills of a wizard...meaning they're so advanced ....few spectators can even comprehend how he does it..so we are reduced to entertaining a new theory every week..

Oh...his opponent was terrified last night.....or .....his opponent was blinded by the sun..

I've got news for you ... GGG's chin will also appear to be hanging out in plain sight when he eventually faces Ward.....The twist will be .....what happens when Ward tries to take advantage of it...

Like Hagler, who had a responsible defense..GGG will present the chin occasionally as incentive if that's whats needed to pry open his opponents defense. Expect GGG to be around for most of this decade providing thrills we haven't seen since the nigh-mythical Golden Era.

### **Radam G says:**

Amateur boxing is on television, B'Sug. Just this weekend the 2013 National Golden Gloves was shown on FOX. For years, ESPN Classics has been telecasting the yearly U.S. National Amateur Championships, and every year the College Sports' Channel shows the yearly Collegiate Championships. And time to time, National Junior Championships are on NBC. With the new markets, amateur boxing events are plenty on the web channels. Check 'em, my MAN! No homo! Holla!

### **Carmine Cas says:**

I guess at least of the editors has to be critical of GGG. Yes I think Macklin was scared by GGG's power but GGG def looks promising. However every fighter can be beat, bring on Quillen's big mouth!

### **Carmine Cas says:**

[QUOTE=Radam G;32937]Nice, fair piece. But Buddy McGirt is full of syet. In his own era, some said that there were not any great welterweights, because jealous muthacrimbs were "Sweet Pea" Whitaker hating.

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Buddy was probably just angry because he didn't get a chance to holla his famous slogan: "I'm stopping it, baby! Holla!/[QUOTE]

Hahahaha he's pissed at GGG's fists that's why he's down playing his abilities

### **Radam G says:**

And let me not forget the military channel. It shows the Armed Forces Services championships and the CISM Games -- the military-style Olympics of countries of the world. Holla!

### **brownsugar says:**

Didnt know that RG.....These days Amateur boxing has become a niche for those who can afford a good sports cable package... as much as I love boxing..I can't name a single amateur...and I've never accidently surf into an amateur boxing shoe even with the search function.. when the wide world of sports covered boxing the whole nation knew who was who from Ali to Holy field.....sadly there's no comparison to the amateur coverage provided in the 70'sand 80s

### **Radam G says:**

What the 90s? Regular televison was still putting out boxing until until 1996. And the O games at Hotlanta. Holla!

### **Raiders says:**

Rigo wants a fight with Donaire: amateurs don't matter

Golovkin has a great amateur resume: he's getting all this praise

No one should get this much credit when Ishida is your 3rd best win

### **Real Talk says:**

Golovkin is the goods. Nuff said.

Dueces