

## Thompson & Solis Represent Why Klitschkos Own Post-Lewis Era

Written by Frank Lotierzo  
Monday, 24 March 2014 13:32

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This past weekend heavyweight contenders Tony Thompson 40-4 (26) and Odlanier Solis 20-2 (13) met for the WBC International title in Tekirdag, Turkey. Forget about the International title that was up for grabs, the real prize for the winner was the opportunity to face the Bermane Stiverne vs. Chris Arreola winner; they meet on May 10th for the vacated WBC title that came up for grabs when defending champ Vitali Klitschko recently retired.

Thompson, 42 has earned two shots at the title and was stopped both times by WBA/WBO/IBF title holder Wladimir Klitschko, the last time being in July of 2012. Solis, 33, fought for the title once and was stopped by Wladimir's older brother Vitali Klitschko in the first round, back in March of 2011.

The 6'5" Thompson defeated Solis via a 12-round split decision by the scores of 115-113, 115-114 and 112-116. Solis was a celebrated amateur and gold medal winner in the heavyweight division at the 2004 Olympic games in Athens, Greece. He was also known for beating fellow Cuban sensation Felix Savon twice in three fights. In December of 2006 he defected from the Cuban National team and turned pro in April of 2007. At the time of his pro debut he was viewed as a highly talented and skilled heavyweight and thought to perhaps be a legitimate threat to disrupt and possibly end the stranglehold over the heavyweight division employed by Wladimir and Vitali Klitschko that began with the retirement of Lennox Lewis in 2003. In his bout against Klitschko, Solis injured his right knee trying to catch his balance after being hit by a right to the temple with only seconds remaining in the first round. And some actually felt that he was hurt before the fight but didn't let anyone know because he didn't want to lose his shot at the title. Either way the fight didn't last long enough to truly gauge just how formidable a challenger Solis was.

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Tony Thompson turned pro without much hype and fanfare in 2000 and already lost before the year was over, in his fifth bout. After the loss Thompson ran off 27 straight wins due to good timing and management along with his good work ethic. During his 27 bout win streak heading into his first title bout with Wladimir Klitschko, Thompson beat fringe contenders and journeymen Vaughn Bean, Dominick Guinn, Timur Ibragimov and Luan Krasniqi. Heading into the Klitschko bout, Thompson was viewed as a grinder, but there was a thought permeating out there that his long reach and southpaw style could possibly trouble Wladimir. As it turned out that wasn't the case, Wladimir was just too physically skilled and strong for Thompson and ultimately stopped him in the 11th round of a fight that he basically controlled from the onset. When they met again four years later, it was basically a rerun of their first fight only this time Klitschko needed just six rounds to turn back Thompson's second bid to take his title. Which brings us to why the heavyweight division is in the doldrums today.

Tony Thompson and Odlanier Solis represent both ends of the spectrum as to the reason why Wladimir and Vitali Klitschko have been so dominant and have rarely lost rounds let alone fights during the past 10 years. Think about it, Vitali hasn't lost since fighting Lennox Lewis back in June of 2003 and Wladimir hasn't been defeated since Lamon Brewster beat him back in April of 2004.

In the case of Solis, he represents how talent alone isn't enough and how unforgiving boxing can be to fighters who are lazy and won't get in shape. On the other hand, the 42 year old Thompson, who is not a gifted fighter, keeps upsetting peoples' apple carts and earning big fights, illustrating just how pedestrian the division is. For Solis it was another stinker in a big spot with his career on the line - whereas Thompson stretched the most out of his ability and once again beat a fighter who was both technically better and more gifted than him. Sure, Thompson isn't undefeated or aesthetically pleasing to watch, but three of his four loses were to Wladimir Klitschko twice and unbeaten Kubrat Pulev (who will soon challenge for the title) in his last fight before facing Solis, and only Klitschko has stopped him.

The reason that we've seen the Klitschkos dominate for the last decade is easy to see. For starters both brothers are very tall, long and strong. Winning and being successful is a very high priority to them, and we've never seen either Wladimir or Vitali show up on fight night out of shape or disinterested in the outcome. They can both punch and figured out early on in their careers how to use their size; yes, they're more than just big. They also view boxing as a respectful sport and an honorable way to make a living. Therefore they think it's disrespectful to show up for a fight out of shape and in the process cheat themselves and the fans. Something else that's never mentioned is this...they see boxing as a means to an end. In other words, work hard and sacrifice now in turn for the riches and glory that will come later. Basically, boxing is a vehicle to open doors for them down the road when they retire, as we've already seen with Vitali who is going to run for president of Ukraine if it isn't taken over by Russia in the meantime.

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However, for fighters to be respected in their post boxing life, they have to be seen as winners when they were active fighters, which of course applies to both Wladimir and Vitali.

During the past decade both brothers have faced all type of different styles and fighters during their title reign. Which again brings us back to Tony Thompson and Odlanier Solis. In Thompson you have a fighter who is not really gifted, and he represents one faction of fighters that both brothers have faced. Thompson has size and desire, but he's not really good at anything and has no identity as a fighter. He's not fast nor is he really a good boxer and he lacks finishing power. Sure, he gives 100% but just doesn't have the needed physical tools and skills to beat either Klitschko, who are his equal in size and desire in addition to being able to box and punch really well. Then there's the Solis faction of fighters they've faced, fighters who were gifted but lacked conditioning and desire. The fighters who had the physical tools to bother or possibly beat the Klitschkos lacked the initiative and boxing aptitude to really test them and apply it.

We can look at Floyd Mayweather's career and note that in most of his big fights there was a manufactured angle that he deliberately sought out in tilting the ring or field of play in his favor. The difference with the Klitschkos is, they fight whoever is out there and don't seek an edge in picking their opponents. The edge is by nature and already built in for them being that today's heavyweight division is a land of tweeners. You can go back and look over the last decade, not many of the brothers' opponents brought a single weapon to the ring that was a bigger concern to them than the formidable problem they presented their opponents. If they fought big guys like them, they held the advantage in boxing ability and power. If they were confronted with guys who could punch, they shut them down and made them afraid to even try and get off with anything consequential for a majority of the bout. The few fighters they had to fight who were better boxers than them were too small to box them and were held in check while they were looking to box and score.

The only way we were going to see either Klitschko get beat after Lennox Lewis retired circa 2003/2004, is if a Tony Thompson with Odlanier Solis' ability showed up one night. Sadly, a fighter like Thompson will never have nearly enough skill and ability to get the job done, and Solis will never fight to the best of his ability because he lacks the gumption and constitution needed to harvest it. And that's not either brothers' fault. They both trained hard and always were looking to improve as fighters. Couple that with their size and power it becomes crystal clear why we've seen Wladimir and Vitali Klitschko dominate and own the heavyweight division during the post Lennox Lewis era.

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### **Stick&move says:**

Oner is a crooked shark that has hitched his wagon on discovering the next heavyweight champ. Solis was never a safe bet. He boxed well at amateur level at heavyweight with solid fundamentals and good power, but his terrible work ethic once away from the dictatorial training in Cuba has destroyed any chance of him being a champion pro, albeit in a weak era for heavyweights. And if he was in shape? Any tall heavyweight with a strong jab and an ability to tie up on the inside and use their weight would break him down. Young Klit would murder him in the pros no matter what shape he came in.

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Nice post S&M. I gotta agree with you once he left the Cuban gyms his discipline took a mean blow. The K bro's would batter him pillar to post any night of the week, and he wouldn't wanna be out there for long.

Solis became one of the many who came to lands where life was much easier, and he no longer had to fight so hard for his bread..

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Solis became one of the many who came to lands where life was much easier, and he no longer had to fight so hard for his bread..[/QUOTE] A new way of eating soften Solis up. It has been proven. Much of Kano-mainland food -- with all those darn chemical in it -- gives dudes breasts, thigh and butts and behavior like females.

Hate the message, not me -- the messenger -- Solis was punkedified [sic]. And in the words of a former Cali governor: "He's [now] a girlie man."

Absolutely no offense to the boxing dames, dolls and damsels with the phrase "girlie man."

I would not offend you ladies anyway, because now trainer Anne "Da Mermaid" Wolfe punkedified me so badly back in da day that I excused myself to the gym's bathroom and jumped out of the window and ran like a bytch, because she challenged me to spar to with her, and said that she was going to "whup [my] high-yellow lil' @\$\$" and then do da do to me.

WTF! You cats and kittens know what I'm talking about. Hehehe! Holla!

### Skibbz says:

Girlie men indeed! Was recently in Qatar, and the amount of morbidly obese girlie men you see it incredible... Will give Texas a run for there money!

Almost all the guys carry bags of weight around their rear, breasts and thighs... And they are breasts. I did not understand why or how they let themselves get to that stage.. It was pointed out to me that all that lard is somewhat of a status symbol, tells another guy "hey I've got food on my plate".. Now I'm not exactly going hungry these days but damn i wouldn't stuff my face with all that syeeeeet of you paid me!!

### Stick&move says:

Solis appearing like a water balloon filled with grease may in fact be a biproduct of a chemical imbalance in his nutrition, but waddling around and throwing one punch at a time comes from being lazy in the gym. Andy Ruiz and Arreola look like they should be doing a 20' burlesque peep show but those boys come to fight hard for every round.

### Skibbz says:

I think it's precisely the chemical imbalance that is demotivating him. You are what you eat, Radam G will tell you that, and if you're eating all that junk then you will be junk. If you lean green and marine then you'll be one mean fighting machine. Somebody tell Solis quick...

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### **Grimm says:**

Waistpadding is common everywhere rags turn into riches. I know alot of people from the Middle East, and alot of them are size 5XL - partly because they can afford to eat (which isn't a given for everyone from their parts), partly because it constitutes prestige and status, partly because food - plenty of food - is a traditional way for a woman/mother to show her care for her husband/children. During Europes 17th century, gross overweight was common among the nobility, whose dinners where orgies of food, puking it up and then back to the table for some more.

The heavyweight abyss of today has more to do with a minimal pool of heavyweights than food, though. Reasons are easy to be found, but fact remains: they are few, and they aren't any good. Add a lack of competent training during the formative years and what we get is the current state.

### **Radam G says:**

And I still say that "minimal pool of heavyweights" is from BIG, BIG MONEY in the game now going to all weight divisions. And the onslaught of the pseudo-cruiserweight division. The heavyweight division starts above a buck one seventy five.

I cannot think of a single in-his-prime all-time great being above 215lbs except for Iron Mike.

Once again! Big Money to all weight divisions and the pseudo-cruiserweight division jive up da game. WOW! John L Sullivan, Jack Johnson, Jack Dempsey, Joe Louis, Rocky Marciano, Gene Tunney and Floyd Patterson would have all being considered cruiserweight.

You will partly kill the disgraceful stock of fatties and tallies by at least getting rid of the pseudo-cruiserweight division. The smaller heavies would put the fatties and tallies to sleep. Holla!

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Still, to quote HBK, I got two words for ya: Lennox Lewis. (250)

Another two: George Foreman. (218-250)

I also consider 240-pound Vitali Klitschko an all-time great. When you lose less than 10 rounds in a career well into your 40s, you're a badass.

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### **The Commish says:**

I so agree with your last post, Shadow. It's amazing how few rounds either of the Klitschkos have lost in their amazing careers.

But the Klitschko Era is coming to an end. Vitali is in the toughest fight of his career, a fight he may lose more than a few rounds, and Wlad is coming off a fight in which he initiated--not was involved in, but INITIATED--171 clinches. Next up is Alex Leapai.

Usually, I don't like looking past a fighter's next opponent. In this case, let's look past Leapai. Let's look to the winner of the Bermane Stiverne v Cris Arreola fight coming up in a little over a month. It'll be Wlad vs. one of them in the Fall, with the winner to meet Deontay Wilder next

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Then there's Amir Mansour-Steve Cunningham coming up next week, Tyson Fury vs Dereck Chisora & Bryant Jennings vs Mike Perez (still being negotiated, but looking good), along with at least one more tuneup for Wilder.

The Klitschko Era of dominance is over.

It's back to Heavyweight Demolition Derby again!

-Randy G.

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-Randy G.[/QUOTE]

Yes, I like it! As Klitschko ages and these young guns season, the talent gap narrows -- and back comes the suspense!

### **The Commish says:**

I doubt Klitschko will have trouble with Alex Leapai, but look out when he faces the Tyson Fury-Dereck Chisora winner. I still believe that, by the time Deontay Wilder is through, he is going to clean up the heavyweight division and hold every belt possible!

-Randy G.



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### **Grimm says:**

@Commish: You could be right, but if you're right, that would mean the division would be even weaker than during the Klitschko Era...and not much to behold. Not that heavyweights are much to behold in the first place. Gimme lightweights! Welterweights! Middleweights! Heavyweights? Zzzz.

### **brownsugar says:**

I think I've spoken as highly of the K Brothers as anyone on this site not named Mortcola, I've paid to watch their fights online for \$14.99 maybe more so than I should admit, and I've watched while good friends, acquaintances and even immediate family members abandoned their fights before round 3 despite the free food and Liquor I laid out as bait to draw some reluctant company over to join me on Klitschko Night.

My own 29 year old son and bossum boxing buddy even left me 1:23 of the 3rd round during the Wlad vs Tony Thompson rematch.

but through it all I've never blamed the sad heavyweight scene on either brother.

The KBros simply inherited a dire situation after it seemed that 90% of the capable big men with boxing talent and potential are apparently doing something else.

Maybe they are Selling Shoes,.. fishing for crab in the arctic poles?...or doing reality TV,..... I don't know.

but there is no need for the author to throw in a left handed slap against Mayweather or anybody else in any other weight class.

nearly every other division with possible exception of the cruiserweights have more talent and potential on their worst day at the 25th and below ranking than anyone in the entire heavyweight division.... with only Haye and Povetkin being the notable exceptions.

But I have to say I have truly appreciated Wlad,... while watching him alone,... from the safety and privacy of my closet, amid the jeers, criticisms, and flying beer bottles.. I feel they would have stacked up well against the best in history. They have remained a shining example to discipline and professionalism. Obviously they will leave the division with some of the highest stats in history... (well almost, as long as Wilder is protected, nobody could be expected to surpass numbers like his without being isolated)

But will we miss them when they've gone?,... sadly, I don't think very much.... but it doesn't detract from their accomplishments and overall class....