Written by Rick Folstad
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America should find a way to adopt this guy, maybe forge some legal papers, pay a large administrative fee, doctor-up some certificates and call him one of our own.

Americanize him. Teach him about Paul Revere and Custer's Last Stand. Tell him about Opie Taylor and Roy Rogers. Explain the crack in the Liberty Bell.

We could pretend he's from Philly or Brooklyn, a local kid born and raised. Grew up on the city streets. Tell everyone his birthday is July 4th and his favorite holiday is Flag Day.

Polite, smart and one of the best fighters in the world, Tomasz Adamek is just about everything you'd want in an American heavyweight champion right now. He just doesn't have the right birth certificate.

It would be fun to pretend he's as American as Mount Rushmore, as much a Yankee as Ethan Allen. We could really use a heavyweight champ we can be proud of, someone who kisses babies, goes to hospitals to visit the sick and injured, and draws huge crowds just by walking down the street.

Too bad we can't lie. He's not from here, he just lives here. He chose to move to New Jersey from his native Poland a few years ago. He actually picked Jersey City, which makes him about as American as the Cubs, Nebraska and apple pie.

The former cruiserweight and light-heavyweight champion of the world is now quickly closing in on a heavyweight title, or at least a chance to win one. And we haven't had a legitimate, dominating, look-out-world-here-I-come, bona fide heavyweight champion in this country since the Mike Tyson years.

Even if Adamek does become a heavyweight champ, he still won't be one of ours. Not completely. Not in the bragging rights sense.

Adamek (43-1, 28 KOs) is scheduled to fight Kevin McBride (35-8-1, 29 KOs) on April 9 at the Prudential Center in Newark (HBO ppv). The fight is so close to his home, Adamek could almost walk to the Prudential Center. It's a definite home-field advantage.

There's no title riding on this fight, but it's a chance for Adamek to learn what it's like to throw

punches at an oak tree. At a broad 6-foot-6, McBride resides in that rare Klitschko land, up there where the air is thin.

McBride is from Clones, Ireland, which explains the nickname of “Clones Colossus.” He’s a good guy for Adamek to fight considering what Adamek’s future plans are. He’s suppose to fight one of the Klitschko brothers in September for whatever title the brother he fights is holding at the time. Could be anything.

Right now, Adamek is ranked No. 1 in the WBO behind champ Wladimir Klitschko, and he’s No. 3 in the IBF standings behind Wladimir and two unknowns, who are identified as “not rated” and “not rated.”

Not rated makes it sound like a movie premier. Apparently, the IBF is waiting before it makes any commitment. So the IBF is left with two vacancies: No. 1 and No. 2. Adamek is No. 3.

I’ve never paid too much attention to the different systems used for ranking fighters. My idea has always been to put the division’s best fighter (champion) at the top and then work your way down, starting with the second best fighter in the division followed by the third best fighter followed by the….Well, you get the idea.

As for booking a tough fight ahead of an already scheduled world title fight, it’s usually a bad thing to do. It’s like getting married before you hold your stag party. Nothing good can come out of it.

But this is a little different. Adamek can get some valuable experience fighting a Klitschko-sized guy who doesn’t own a Klitschko-sized punch.

Adamek is risking his shot at the heavyweight title if he loses to McBride, but it’s also going to keep him out of the house and out of his wife‘s hair.

“This is my next step before Klitschko,” Adamek said at a press conference to promote the McBride fight. “My wife says I have ADHD (attention deficit hyperactive disorder). I can’t sit at home with nothing doing. This is my life.

“Somebody asked me why I am fighting before I have a guaranteed title fight, and I said, ‘I want to be active, this is my job. I can’t stay home eight or nine months.’ So we made the fight. Thank you, Kevin, for taking this fight.”

What’s left is a Polish heavyweight fighting an Irish heavyweight in Newark, N.J.

“I‘m from Ireland, I‘m Irish and I‘m proud to be a fighter,” said McBride, who beat Mike Tyson in 2005 when a tired, aging Tyson refused to come out for the start of the seventh round. “This is a big fight for me. An Irish painter, Sean Scully, said to me a couple years ago, ‘follow your dream,’ and that’s what I‘m going to do, follow my dream."

McBride said if he gets Adamek into the later rounds, he's going to hit him so hard on the chin,

Adamek will think "the whole of Poland hit him."

Adamek said McBride was a "big man," and they "respect him." but he plans on being a heavyweight champion of the world.

"This is my life, this is my way, this is my destiny," Adamek said.

And right now, this is his country.

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