Written by Frank Lotierzo
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V weighed 249, Solis 246 1/2 on Friday for their Saturday clash. This is a decent sign for those craving an upset...that's the lightest Solis has been as a professional.

Now with the Wladimir Klitschko-David Haye heavyweight title bout pretty much set for this coming summer, those who still love and follow the heavyweight division will have their eyes on Saturday's WBC heavyweight title clash between champ Vitali Klitschko 41-2 (38) and undefeated contender Odlanier Solis 17-0 (12). And the 30-year-old Solis, as some have said since the bout was signed, just may be the most dangerous opponent Vitali will face during his second title reign since he beat Samuel Peter back in October of 2008 to win the vacant WBC

belt.

The WBC's top contender was an accomplished amateur who won a Gold Medal at the 2004 Olympics for Cuba in the 201 pound division. He then defected to the United States and isn't a joke among today's so called heavyweight elite. He's big and confident, but Solis' his work ethic leaves a lot to be desired. Add to that he's openly admitted that he doesn't even like boxing and says it's just a job and doesn't even bother to look at tapes of his opponents, it's hard to get excited about his chances to compete with Klitschko, let alone beat him. But if he shows up in the best shape of his career, something I'll assume he will, he does posses the needed tools to topple Vitali. Even if his body doesn't break down, something that's always in play when Vitali fights.

In some ways Vitali at age 39 looks almost as good as he ever has. But his legs have looked stiff at times during his recent bouts and he doesn't seem to punch with the speed and fluidity he once did. There's also been rumors abound that Vitali has labored in getting to the gym to train for the fight. As always these type rumors seem to surface whenever Vitali fights. Yet on fight night he's always prepared and wins handily and seldom loses a round to his opponent.

Counting on either Wladimir or Vitali Klitschko to look past or take any opponent lightly has been a losing proposition for the last seven years, but at the end of the day, just maybe Vitali took a peek at Solis's last fight, a ten-round disqualification win over Ray Austin? If he did, he saw a lethargic Solis beating the 40 year old Austin without having to call on his reservoir of skill and talent. And it's easy to see a fighter as confident as Vitali Klitschko looking at Solis and think he's fighting Samuel Peter with a little bit more of an imaginative offense and style. And we all saw how well Peter competed with a rusty Vitali coming off an almost four year period of inactivity. He didn't.

It's been a common theme among boxing observers to declare that some of Vitali's opponents have approached their fights against him with a sparring partners' mentality. And that's a well founded thought, however, Vitali has shown that he's quite capable of shutting his opponents down and breaking their will by the midway point of the fight. And once he senses they're fighting more to survive and go the distance than anything, he goes about picking up the pace and gets the late round stoppage.

That said, I get the notion Solis will bring his A-game on Saturday and try to push an aging Vitali off the cliff. And if Vitali just so happens to have read too much into the Ray Austin fight and doesn't see Solis as the threat he potentially is, he just may find himself in for a long night, and it may even cost him his WBC title.

Solis showing up in great shape and Vitali looking past him is a bet I wouldn't take. Actually, the safer bet is Vitali showing up in the best possible shape he can be in, and Solis weighing-in at a career high. Obviously, we'll be hoping that Solis's effort and preparation for the fight were at least equal to or better than Vitali's. Then we just may see a heavyweight title bout that we'll be talking about the next day.

No doubt Vitali Klitschko's career is winding down, and he hasn't been shy about hiding his political aspirations when he's through boxing. He's been an under appreciated title holder during his career. And more than likely he'll get his just due a few years after he retires like other past champions have. He hasn't been pushed during a fight since he fought Lennox Lewis in 2003. And in that fight, despite losing it, he received more props than he had in any of his victories before or afterward.

Maybe if Solis is good enough to push Klitschko and he has to dig deep, but manages to find a way to win, Vitali will get some of the past due homage that has never been paid to him once during his career. Forget about how great one may think he is or isn't, the fact is the guy has dominated his era and never ducked or avoided one single heavyweight of his generation who was a perceived threat to him.

And there's something to be said for that, isn't there?

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brownsugar says:

actually... much like George Foreman did in his comeback,... the deeper Vitali goes into the "2nd Phase" of his career,... the better he looks. The Peters and Gomez fights were some of the ugliest, boring, and sloppiest affairs I've ever had the misfortune of watching.. But against the "semi-retired" 38 year old Briggs and the game but limited Sosnowski Vitali looked much better...If anything Vitali is improving, the Solis camp can't depend on meeting a broken or depleted version of the Ukrainian prodigy...Vitali will be at his best. I've started joggin again, about a week ago since the weather broke. the first time I did 4 laps around a quarter mile track... second time 6 laps and by this tuesday I'll be at 2miles(8 laps)... The point is.. my last two laps are always the fastest and hardest because I know I'm approaching my goal and the pain will soon be over. Similarly...Solis seems to do enough in each fight to win,.. but you can see his urgency in the later rounds as he nears the end of the fight. It's like you don't see the best of Solis untill he's challenged or in danger of failing to reach his goal. He fights like he has an internal scorecard in his brain, when he thinks he's behind he automatically goes into overdrive to catch up..much like a jogger hitting the final lap or ramping up the pace to get over that pesky hill. I think there will be various levels of escalation by both fighters as each one as the competiton heats up... (especially in Germany where you nearly have to have a fully loaded 357 magnum to win)...also I don't think it's any coincidence that Solis has a majority of huge,.. tall heavyweights while working his way up the ranks.... I'm expecting a competitive and entertaining bout. Vitali is the huge betting favorite, Solis will have to earn it every step of the way. I can't imagine a 247lb Solis running into punches the way Areola did.....however Vitali will not be like anybody Solis has beaten so far... I'm going to register on EPIXHD so I can watch at 6pm tomorrow. should be an interesting fight and serve as good apetizer for Bute/McGee.

brownsugar says:

it turns out that La Sombra (the Shadow) won't need a 357magnum after all since he's fought his entire career in germany. and at 246, lighter than I expected for just 4 weeks in the mountains,.. we may be able to watch a decent heavyweight contest if Solis can fight up to his potential. will his excellent amateur pedigre and 17 pro bout experience be enough for a grizzled vet like Vitali,..honestly I don't know..... we shall see in approx 18hours from now.

Radam G says:

Thank heaven for the casinos and March Madness. I'll be gettin' my gambling on and seeing a B-sport -- not boxing during the daylight hours in Cali. Holla!

the Roast says:

If if if. If its and nuts were candy and butts than all the the gay horses would ride. That's the old expression I think.