KELLY PAVLIK,
TRAINER JACK LOEW & PROMOTER BOB ARUM
CONFERENCE CALL HIGHLIGHTS

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Former World Middleweight Champion KELLY “The Ghost” PAVLIK, his trainer JACK LOEW and Hall of Fame promoter BOB ARUM participated in an international media conference call on Friday to discuss Pavlik’s upcoming return to boxing on Saturday, May 7 at the sold out MGM Grand in Las Vegas, Nev.

Pavlik (36-2, 32 KOs), of Youngstown, OH, will make his long-awaited return to the ring when he takes on undefeated World Boxing Council (WBC) Continental Americas super middleweight champion ALFONSO “El Tigre” LOPEZ (21-0, 16 KOs), of Cut and Shoot, TX.

The 10-round Pavlik-Lopez super middleweight rumble will headline the Manny Pacquiao vs. Shane Mosley World Boxing Organization (WBO) welterweight championship undercard. Promoted by Top Rank, in association with MP Promotions, Sugar Shane Mosley Promotions, Tecate and MGM Grand, the four-fight Mosley-Pacquiao pay-per-view extravaganza will be produced and distributed live on SHOWTIME PPV®.

Closed circuit tickets, priced at $50, are on sale and available at all Las Vegas MGM Resorts properties.

The Pacquiao vs. Mosley pay-per-view telecast, beginning at 9 p.m. ET/6 p.m. PT, has a suggested retail price of $54.95, will be produced and distributed by SHOWTIME PPV®. The telecast will be available in HD-TV for those viewers who can receive HD. For Pacquiao vs. Mosley fight week updates, log on to www.sports.SHO.com or www.toprank.com.

What the participants had to say on Friday:

BOB ARUM: “We really anticipate May 7, one because Pacquiao-Mosley, we believe, is going to be a great fight, great event, and secondly because it’s marks the return to boxing after an absence of Kelly Pavlik – one of the most popular fighters in boxing. Kelly has been training with Jack Loew in Youngstown, Ohio. I want to welcome Kelly back to the boxing stage.”

KELLY PAVLIK: “I want to thank Top Rank and the rest of my team. It’s an honor to be a part of this card. It’s great to be back; I’m really, really excited. Training is going phenomenal right

now. I haven't had this much energy in a long time for a fight. I'm getting ready to get back on track and start making a noise for myself in the super middleweight division.

"Training is going great – everything is just falling right into place. The weight is perfect right now, the amount of running and sparring is better than it's ever been – we've never had as easy a time getting this many rounds. My camp is going really good now, it's really smooth. We don't have to focus on going to 15 different gyms to make weight, we can focus on boxing and I think that's going to make a big difference in this fight."

JACK LOEW: "Like Kelly said, we wanted to train like a fighter again, instead of training five times a day, four times a day, and four of them being about just trying to get the weight or keep the weight down. It's great just getting our running in and our physical conditioning in and going to the gym and spending more time working on boxing. We had more rounds sparring for a 10-round fight than when we fought a title fight because he's had so much energy. His step is back and it's just the old Kelly back. It feels good and it's a very comfortable weight for him. And I think that's a huge key for him."

Jack, are you surprised at how good Kelly is looking in the gym coming off of this long layoff?

LOEW: "No, I don't think I'm surprised at all. We can train again as a normal athlete and we're doing the right thing. Nobody can go through what we put him through, working him out so many different times a day. What we put him, through there's not an athlete out there that could have done that and it finally caught up to him. I'm not surprised at all. He looks great and everything is back to normal."

What is the impact of the layoff?

PAVLIK: "You know what, it's surprising because I expected it to be that way and if was that way I wasn't going to be frustrated, but everything fell right back into place quickly. I kept myself in shape, too. The last time I had a year off it was a different situation. There was a staph infection and then we had the reaction to it. I really wasn't able to do anything constantly being on antibiotics. That wasn't really a rest or my idea of taking a break or a year off. This time, it's totally different. I come back now and my energy level is just totally different than what it's been in the past. I'm able to do things in the gym now where before it was a struggle. Everything came back and it's been very fluent. Granted, in the beginning in the first couple of times of sparring, some of the timing was off. But that's going to happen and there's nothing you can do about it. But it all came back pretty quick this time and everything is going good right now."

Where you able to do physical exercises during the time you were away in rehab?

PAVLIK: "Very little in the time that I had. When I did I just lifted weights and did some other exercises that I would do at the boxing gym because there wasn't much else to do. I kept myself moving. I wasn't rusty or falling apart – I didn't have a big belly or anything else. I was pretty healthy."

Is super middleweight your division long term? And do you see your power being the same there as middleweight?

PAVLIK: "I see it being the same. Actually, I see it being even better. It's not like I'm moving up to go to 168 and I'm adding weight on. I still have to lose a considerable amount of weight to make 168. When you walk around 195 that's still walking around pretty heavy for a super middleweight or a light heavyweight. I don't see the strength being an issue or power-punching.

"I think our strength and everything is going to be great at that weight class. It will be the same, if not better."

There are a lot of super middleweights out there. When do you think you'll be able to get in the ring with someone like Lucian Bute or someone from the Super Six?

ARUM: "Kelly is ready but the guy he's fighting on May 7 is no pushover. He has a lot of knockouts, he's a Texas kid, and that's a tough chore. We'll see how he does in that fight and then we'll talk it over with the team and see who comes next. The super middleweight division is rich with talent and Kelly, I hope and believe, fits right in with all of them.

"You have to understand that there are a lot of great fighters out there in the super middleweight division, but with the exception of Bute in Canada, they're not particularly big attractions in terms of ticket sales. In order for them to make a big ticket fight they have to have Kelly Pavlik. It's not a question of who Kelly is going to go after, it's a question of who the team wants Kelly to fight. These fighters in order to have a big fight have to fight Kelly Pavlik."

Kelly, can you talk about some of the changes you've made in your lifestyle since entering rehab?

PAVLIK: "I'm not one to make any excuses to say that's what hurt my career because I wasn't doing it while I was training. I can easily make it a great excuse, but in my opinion I don't see it as that. But as of now I think the big difference is I'm able to focus more clearly on my career and take everything serious. I think that's going to be the big difference now when compared to the past.

"I do everything the same. The only difference is I don't drink. I don't believe in changing a lifestyle or doing stuff to keep yourself even more unhappy, that leads to even worse problems. My regular day is still the same – I still enjoy everything I do. I'm having a blast doing what I'm doing and I don't need a bottle to keep myself happy. I think that's the big thing. I go to the same stores, I play with my kid the same way, I call people on the phone the same way, nothing has changed. "

Jack, how concerned were you that when he returned to the gym you'd have a completely different person to train?

LOEW: "Every time Kelly came to the gym he worked hard. That's one thing I never had to

worry about no matter what was going on outside of the ring. Kelly was always, always a hard worker in the gym no matter what we did. No matter what we put him through he always gave me 100 percent in the gym. Just like Kelly said, I knew I had a more clear-headed kid coming into the gym and it's all worked out."

What have you seen in Lopez's style?

PAVLIK: "He's a tough kid. He'll try to box in there and he'll try to move a little bit. The danger I see is he's a hungry fighter and this is a golden opportunity for him. He's no spring chicken in the sport and he's getting the opportunity of a lifetime. He has a very good record so I think right now he's coming in hungry for this fight like it's going to be his last chance. Anytime you get a fighter like that you always have to be on your toes and ready for him. We've been watching him on film – he's always in good shape, so we know that. He can go 12 hard rounds or 10 hard rounds. More so, from what I've seen, the kid comes to fight. Nothing phenomenal, but he's a kid that you can't take likely and you've got to be in shape to fight for 10 rounds."

Are you going for the knockout?

PAVLIK: "I'm going to go in there and do what I always do. It's what got me to where I'm at today. I'm going to go in there and just fight the way I fight. If I feel like I need to pick the pace up as the fight goes I'll do that.

"We'll see. It all depends. That's the good thing about boxing – you have to have backup plans and you have to be able to think quick in that ring because it doesn't always go the way that you want it to go. I've had the experience on the big stage and I think that's going to be to my advantage."

Are your techniques or timing a little rusty?

PAVLIK: "Everything is coming back really nice. You're going to have days in sparring where you're like, 'damn, I'm off a little bit today.' That's granted, nobody in the world can go through a training camp and just be sharp every time. But, for the most part, the timing is back, the rust is gone – that's been gone – and we're feeling really good."

What are you working on now to improve?

PAVLIK: "Right now, we have more time to focus on things. Right now, I'm pretty much just working on the hand speed, the movement, getting back to kind of the basics. The power is there so we don't have to work on the power – fortunately, I've been blessed with natural power. So we're working on the fundamentals and getting back to the boxing aspect of it."

Kelly, you mentioned that you don't have to have a bottle to be happy. Have you figured out what led to your rehab situation?

PAVLIK: "It's not always that you have to be unhappy. Pretty much what happened is I got caught up in the partying part. Of course, when you get caught up in that you're going to have

the stress and everything with your home life and everything else that comes along with it. It's pretty much just getting caught up with everything involved; I guess the word to use is the partying. What I mean by I don't need to pick up a bottle, I mean that if I can't drink anymore it's not going to make me unhappy. I'm not going to be a miserable person because I can't drink. But as far as what was making me unhappy or what drove me to the bottle, it wasn't a case of that. It was just the fact that I got caught up in a lifestyle of going out and partying and needing a kick in the ass before it got too late.

"For me, it was just the fact that I don't want to do it because I don't want to end back up in a situation where I was at, especially now with my kids and everything else. It's not worth it. I'm not missing anything. I've seen enough in my lifetime of only 29 years than most people will in three lifetimes. There's not much I'm going to miss out on, so that's how I look at it."

You mentioned this is a chance of a lifetime for Lopez. Do you see this as a fight where you have to rebuild your credibility as a champion caliber fighter?

PAVLIK: "I definitely do think this is a very, very important fight. I think it's a fight where I have to go out there and look good. Unfortunately, in most situations, most fighters with four or five losses can get away with a year-and-a-half layoff and people will say they look good after a year-and-a-half off. Even if I have three years off, if I don't come back and perform at the top of the top it's going to be brutal. So I think this fight is very important for me to get back out there and cement my name out there again. That's why we're taking this fight so seriously. I think this is one of the most important fights of my career, believe it or not."

When you compare yourself now to the person who was going through these past two or three years, what would you say is different?

PAVLIK: "I'm a more mature person now, overall, just in all aspects of life and my career. More mature. What I mean by that is I know what has to be done; I'm not taking anything for granted. I'm able to lay things out better and see the big picture better and start focusing on different parts of life – the future, the present, everything that goes on instead of just flipping out and not thinking about the things that are important to think about. I think now I see things with a better approach and a more mature approach than I would have done in the past."

Kelly do you think you tried to be too many things to too many people? Were you maybe too nice of a guy?

PAVLIK: "That's a good point. It did at some points become overwhelming. Again, I'm not a person to make an excuse, I'm not going to use the pressure of being pulled, but it had a little bit of a help to it. You could easily notice with the staph infection, we had to bring all these people the Cleveland to see that I actually had a staff infection. I got beat up for that. I'm walking around with my IV bag and I'm trying to defend myself at the same time.

"There was a certain amount of time there where we were going at a very fast pace with everything and it just became a little overwhelming. But, the thing is now, we just got to learn how to say no and get ourselves back on track and take care of what's important."

Can you talk about your loyalty to Jack?

PAVLIK: "It's a simple thing. We got to the point in our career where a lot of fighters don't get to. It goes deeper than, 'you have two losses so now it's the time do that (change trainers).' In my opinion, fighters change trainers but they're not always successful when that happens. More times than not they end up losing one of their fights. I think the main thing is once you get a clear head and you can focus on what you have to focus on and make the right decisions in your career. Even as far as the weight issue. Jack Loew had his say, 'you know what, we don't want to but we have to move up in weight class because it ain't going to work at 160 – it's totally impossible.' Simple things like that, those type of decisions make a big difference in your career."

Jack?

LOEW: "Obviously Kelly has been extremely loyal to me. And, obviously, he's been attempted to be pulled in many different ways. We lost to two great fighters, our record speaks for itself. I think if Kelly was not getting any better or at a stand-still then maybe we could be concerned. But we're not. Everything is going the way we want it to go. We moved up in weight class. I think a lot of people are going to see a more complete Kelly. Going off the two losses that we had, that's complete ridiculous. A lot of people don't know the circumstances we had. To blame anybody I think the whole camp would have to take blame for a lot of things that went on in those fights. We just got to go out there and prove ourselves and I need to continue to do a good job with Kelly. We need to take care of business against Lopez and go from there.

"It was his decision to quit drinking. People have to realize that. We didn't put a gun to his head and make him go to California. He did that. He's trying to make himself a better person and I don't think people are giving him as much credit as he deserves. I think everybody involved in this is going to benefit from what Kelly did – not from what we had Kelly do, but what he did. I think everyone is going to see a whole different fighter come May 7."

Is this like a second chance? Are you relieved not to be in the main event?

PAVLIK: "It's definitely a second chance. As far as not being the main event on a Manny Pacquiao card, I have no complaints with that. Even after being off for a year-and-a-half to be on the undercard is a pleasure of mine and an honor. It's going to be more of a great experience to be a part of this card on May 7. I'm just worried about getting back in there and performing and moving on with my career.

"I've never done anything to offend anyone. I didn't do anything for them to jump off the bandwagon. Fighters lose; even great, great champions have a lot of losses. As far as going back out there and trying to win people back, I'll never do that again. When I get back on top, the ones that jumped off I don't even want them back. I want the people who have been there and supported me and been with me through thick and thin. That's the only ones that I'll be fighting for on May 7 in Vegas."

Did you have any moment where you realized you needed to change?

PAVLIK: “No, not at all. More or less what it was just the route that it was going. It wasn’t one experience or it wasn’t a life threatening experience or anything like that. It was just the point where it came to, ‘hey, it’s got to stop.’

“It wasn’t me getting roughed up or shooting somebody or robbing somebody to get alcohol or vice-versa, it wasn’t that extreme. But it came to a point where it was like, ‘let’s get our head out of our ass and move on here and let’s get back on track.’”

Bob, was there a time where you thought about you couldn’t count on Kelly?

ARUM: “The staph infection was real and serious and indeed can be life threatening. People don’t understand that if you get a certain type of infection you don’t cure it by iodine. If you don’t undergo the extensive medical treatment you could lose your life. It is something very, very serious. So many of the media said Kelly was drinking and there was nothing wrong with him. They sent people to Youngstown to see the kid. That was unfortunate. Then of course the addition and the problems he had with alcohol, nobody could have solved that expect one person, and that’s Kelly Pavlik. So I think Kelly is a hero and I think he’s a real hero for even talking about it because it’s very, very personal. So I give him a lot of credit and I think he’s going to get his career righted again and he’s going to end up better than he ever was and people will look up to what he did and he’ll be a great example to people who suffer from addiction.”

What was your sobriety date?

PAVLIK: “November 1st or 2nd of this year. Everything has been going fine. There’s no concern with me right now. That’s the least on my mind. There are so many other things out there and everything is going as smooth as possible. It would just take a bonehead to go out there and ruin any situation or opportunity that I have right now.

“I think I treated my (alcoholism) at an early stage. It didn’t get to the point where I couldn’t function without alcohol. It just got to the point where I got in the party mode and it kept escalating. When things didn’t go my way I got mad and I kept doing what I was doing. That’s exactly what happened. I just needed to kick it in the ass before things started going bad – to where I started losing my money, to where I started losing my family, losing my house and things like that. Unfortunately that’s one of the horrible things that come with the consequences that come with addiction. I didn’t want it to get that far. I worked too hard in my life to get where I am now that I didn’t want it to get out of control to that point.

“Boxing has been a very big part of my life since I was 9 years old, alcohol isn’t.

ARUM: “I want to really congratulate Kelly on how he handled this call. Questions that were asked of him, they were appropriate questions, but they were deeply personal in nature and Kelly handled it with candor and dignity and showed what a real man he is. I would, for one, look forward to his appearance in the ring on the Pacquiao-Mosley card and I’m sure all of you are looking forward to that.”

Comment on this article

Isaiah says:

I wish all the best for Pavlik, but he isn't about to regain the championship again. If he fights again, you all can expect him to probaly be feasting on bums like Gary Lockett or Marco Antonio Rubio in rematches no one wants to see. I think if Bernard Hopkins didn't beat the fight out of him, then Sergio Martinez finished the job. I think Pavlik would probaly go life and death with Daniel Jacobs at this point. Alcoholism is no joke. Such a shame to. Kelly sure wasn't the smoothest boxer, but the man at least could hit and keep on coming if he got in serious trouble. Just ask Jermaine Taylor.

brownsugar says:

Overrated after he won the title,.. but perhaps he was most underrated after his loss to Hopkins.. Even though Jermaine Taylor never quite lived up to the hype ...he was still able to defeat a prime BHop twice in close bouts... Jermaine was never the same after loosing to Pavlik... neither was Miranda ...who before being destroyed by Pavlik was robbed by hometown officiating after breaking AA's jaw in Germany. We call Rubio a bum,.. but after watching his skillful demolition of Lemieux on ESPN, we now know there's more to Rubio than what met the eye when he quit against Pavlik in the late rounds. Sergio never came close to knocking Pavlik out and had to hide through the middle rounds after being taught the meaning of respect from Pavliks' omnipresent right. .. Pavlik was then suckered into a fast cash grab move by taking on BHop after his dispicably weak showing against Calzaghe (weak in the sense that he complained more than he fought)... We have to remember that Bernard beat a guy who was compaigning at 160 yet is still able to make prime 175 pounders look bad (Pascal and Tarver) so there's no shame to that loss. and maybe "being suckered" is poor choice of words to use regarding Pavlik because for the short while he was on top he was there to fight everybody.. Pavlik did not descriminate against opponents by weeding out the best... Pavlik is still young enough... if the drive is still there and his trainer can get some training...there may still be hope for his boxing future... at the very least... there's still at least 2-5 million$$$$ waiting for him when he decides he's ready to punch-in and go back to work. Maybe he can spoil another p4p prospect before it's all over.

"B" says:

I just hope people won't forget how good this guy can be. I don't think Kelly has even reached his full potential. And also people.....remember That Kelly was starting to really turn the tide in the fight against Martinez before that nasty cut. I think he would have won that fight because of the adjustments he clearly made. I do not want to come off like I am discounting what Martinez

has done but I think after his awesome knockout of my boy Paul people jumped on his band wagon a little too quick. Stay Up folks !!!!

FighterforJC says:

Pavlik has had all sorts of sex, he said, and he wouldn't be missing out much any more. Good for him.