



I can see it now. A guy staggers out of a Times Square bar late Saturday afternoon and stumbles into a fist fight right on 45th and Broadway.

The guy isn't in the fight, but he can see it up there on the big screen, two fighters swapping jabs and hooks in living color, bigger than life, the same place they celebrate the new year in the Big Apple every January.

The big screen is within walking distance of the legendary Madison Square Garden, but the live

## Boxing Ain't Dead? Sturm-Macklin Will Draw 18,000 In Cologne FYI...FOLSTAD

Written by Rick Folstad

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fight they'll be watching on the Jumbo Tron is taking place thousands of miles away in Cologne, Germany.

The guy from the bar can't believe what he's seeing, so he goes back to the saloon and tells everyone there's a fight going on just outside the bar door. Then he orders a double.

The fight is being shown on the big screen at Times Square starting at 5 p.m. Eastern Time this Saturday, thanks to Epix, a premium entertainment channel, video-on-demand and on-line service launched Oct. 30, 2009. Epix will also stream the fight live as part of a free two-week trial offer on [Epix.HD.com](http://Epix.HD.com).

The two guys who will be slugging it out on the big screen Saturday are fighting for the WBA middleweight championship of the world, though you can be pretty sure very few of the Times Square browsers will know who either fighter is. That's because it isn't Hagler versus Hearns or Leonard versus Duran or even Cooney versus Holmes. It's Sturm versus Macklin. Germany versus Ireland. One accent versus another, thicker accent. And unless you need a passport to get to Times Square, you probably don't know who they are.

Well, maybe you know one of them. Felix Sturm of Germany. He's the guy who ripped the "S" off the chest of Oscar De La Hoya back when the Golden Boy was still leaping over tall buildings with a single bound.

Seven years ago, Sturm lost a controversial decision to De La Hoya who was helped along by some questionable, hometown judging.

Turns out Sturm, now with a record of 35-2-1 with 15 KOs, wasn't one of those one-fight wonders. He can fight. A three-time middleweight champ out of Germany, he's been the WBA champ for the past four years and he's defended his title nine times. NINE TIMES. His most recent defense - a seventh round TKO in February - was against a guy with the familiar name of Hearns. Ronald Hearns, son of Hall-of-Famer Tommy Hearns.

Then there's Matthew "Mack the Knife" Macklin, an Irishman by way of Birmingham, England, which is like being a Texan by way of North Dakota.

Macklin is 28-2 with 19 KOs. And like Sturm, he sounds comfortable on a conference call. No one liners or half-baked answers. Nothing the grand kids can't hear. Both Sturm and Macklin should pursue broadcasting careers when they're finished with this fighting stuff.

But right now the only thing they want to talk about is each other and Saturday's fight, which is expected to draw a crowd of more than 18,000 in Cologne. That's a pretty good sign that the fight game may be on wobbly knees here at home, but it's still knocking people out back in the Old Country.

While Sturm is the reigning champion and local favorite, Macklin doesn't sound awed by the idea of fighting for the world title, even if he has to do it in the other guy's backyard.

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“Obviously, with the fight being in Germany, people are saying I’m going to have to knock him out just to get a draw,” Macklin said. “But I’m not dwelling on that. I’m sure I’ll get a fair crack. Hopefully, it won’t come down to (the judges).”

Since this is his first shot at a world title, Macklin said it’s only natural that Sturm is the favorite.

“But you know, I’m twice European champion and I’ve beaten some good fighters,” he said. “And to be honest, I’ve had the best performances in my career when I’m in against the best fighters.”

That’s good because he’ll be up against one of the best on Saturday.

He said he has a tendency to drop his standards to the level of the guy he’s facing, which doesn’t always bring out the best in him.

“But when I’m up against it, when I’m going in as an underdog or at 50-50, that’s when you see the best of me,” he said.

Asked what concerns him most about Sturm, Macklin said the guy always seems to find a way to win. And that’s enough to scare anyone.

“He’s got a great defense, a very good jab and a good left hook,” Macklin said. “Those are the things that jump out at you (when you watch him fight).”

Sturm’s jab is considered one of the best in the game. Macklin described it as “hard and fast.” He also hooks well off it.

“But you know, you can always nullify the jab, especially if you’ve got a good jab yourself,” Macklin said.

Any predictions?

“Yes,” Macklin said. “There’s going to be a new world champion on Saturday.”

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### **Radam G says:**

Just like trees in the forrest or jungle. They ain't dead either. But if you you are not there, you won't hear a falling one. How many peeps around the world will even know about Storm -- I mean Sturm -- and Macklin dance? Boxing is local and global, and this is why it will never die. Trees grow and fall, boxers come and go. The game will never end. This yall oughta ta' kno!' Holla!

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