

Written by Rick Folstad
Thursday, 30 June 2011 10:26



Maybe David Haye has this thing figured out. Maybe he knows the perfect words to heckle the one fighter who could define his career if he could find a way to beat him. And that won't be easy.

It's like Haye is tweaking a sleeping lion's whiskers, giving its tail a nasty twist. He's daring it to wake up, get to its feet and take a swipe at him.

Sure, they might deny it over at the Klitschko camp. They'll tell you it's just the mouth that's roaring, that no one is listening to the silly babble coming from that crazy Haye guy. He's just trying to break into Wladimir's head, cause him a little confusion, a sliver of doubt. Stifle some of that hidden swagger that Wladimir seldom reveals.

Among other insults, Haye, who was born in London, refers to Klitschko as bitchko and said the only time he'll shake Klitschko's hand is in when he visits him in the hospital after the fight.

Funny stuff, but it's easy to understand where Haye gets his material. He's had two years to work on his delivery. That's about how long it's been since Haye first started pointing fingers at the Klitschkos, demanding satisfaction and then disappearing into the night. Along with t-shirts featuring the decapitated heads of the two brothers, he's also predicted he'll stop Wladimir in round 6 of Saturday's fight at the Hamburg (Germany) Imtech Arena.

Who is this guy?

"(Haye) has made a name for himself through his mouth, not through his fights," Wladimir recently told a German magazine. "He is a would-be heavyweight boxer who belongs in the cruiserweight division."

Not exactly a scathing comeback by the Ukrainian. But no one worries about covering their kid's ears when Wladimir goes on a verbal rampage.

Welcome to the Jungle, Haye..The Lion is Awake....FOLSTAD

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And he has a point. He's a big heavyweight. Haye, the WBA champ, is a smaller one. And an inexperienced one. His heavyweight career is only five fights old. It's still just a baby. Most of his knockouts (23 in 25 wins) wins were against cruiserweights.

Klitschko, meanwhile, has had 58 fights against heavyweights and he's won 49 of them by knockout. The WBO and IBF champ, he'll be looking for number 50 on Saturday night.

Welcome to the jungle, Haye. The lion is awake.

Saturday's title fight (HBO) from Hamburg is expected to draw a pretty good crowd to the 55,000-seat soccer stadium. Credit Haye with filling most of the seats. He's like the bandit who rode his horse through a crowded school yard on his way out of town after robbing the bank and shooting the teller. Now they want to see him hang in the town square. Tickets are going fast. They want to see the bad guy swing.

On top of that, the Klitschkos are the most popular one-two combination to hit Germany since they started slathering sour kraut on brats. You don't stomp on the reputation of local legends. You don't call them names, cut their heads off on a t-shirt and you sure don't thumb your nose in their general direction.

If nothing else, you figure Haye is having a good time with all this teasing. You almost expect him to give you a sly wink right after he points down and tells Wladimir his shoes are untied.

But when you get past all the name-calling, the taunting and the boasting, you have to come down to earth. Does Haye really have a chance of beating Klitschko?

Klitschko's trainer, Manny Stewart, would probably tell you the Haye bad-mouthing appears to have roused Wladimir, set him off a little. He says he's never seen his heavyweight so "pumped up," for a fight.

Still, the goading continues.

For all of Haye's badgering, he claims Wladimir just doesn't have the right mindset to be a fighter. He's just too nice a guy.

"To be a truly successful boxer, you have to be one with violence," Haye told the Daily Mail. "Mike Tyson, for instance. He was one with violence. It spilled over into his personal life, but in the ring, you need that tenacity to become great. Whether people like it or not, I must bring that to this fight."

That and maybe a Louisville Slugger.

Maybe Wladimir doesn't have that "necessary" violent streak that Haye says you need in the fight game in order to be great. But so far, he hasn't needed it.

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Maybe Wladimir was right when he said "there's a nice guy in Haye trying to get out."

Whoever that guy is, he better not show up Saturday night.

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deepwater says:

The lion is awake.Haye is the lion in this fight.

amayseng says:

after listening and watching the press conference in which wlad tried to talk smack and be funny, failing miserably at them both, waiting for him to shut up after 15 minutes of rambling i myself want to punch him in the face as well...

seriously, what a complete douche

haye is playing mental, cocky and annoying and letting the russian get all worked up and mad to get him to gas out a bit...

lots of movement and feinting to come from haye with looping bombs..

as haye fights very very patiently

brownsugar says:

Dr Steelhammer is probably more suited for hosting a wine and cheese tasting event than playing the dozens(talking trash) with a guy like Haye.on the flip side both of these fighters are prime physical specimens who are surpurbly conditioned... the only problem is that WK has 30lbs more bone and muscle mass, If they were the same size I'd pick Haye in a heart beat... although Haye's chin is probably weaker that Wlad's.... he still boxes with his hands around his waist which takes amazing reflexes and confidence to do... I could never see Wlad having that ability... and with his immense size he certainly doesn't have to. I'm not blaming Klits for being a big dude...just saying that Haye is just 20-30lbs too lite to be competitive.. hope he proves me wrong and at least provides some dramatic moments to this epic event.

Condor says:

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"Dr Steelhammer is probably more suited for hosting a wine and cheese tasting event than playing the dozens(talking trash) with a guy like Haye." LOL

Excellent post brownsugar. It's been a LONG time since I looked forward to a heavyweight title fight. It's really the first [I]significant[/I] heavyweight title fight since Lewis-Klitschko [I]8 years ago[/I]. And there was no build-up to that, as Klitschko was a late substitute for Kirk Johnson. That fight was just thrust upon us.

You make some great points. People have repeatedly remarked about Klitschko's lack of chin, but what about Haye? It's a part of the storyline that's being completely ignored. If Klitschko connects, the ball game is over. Period. Emmanuel Steward -a respected authority- considers Klitschko among the most powerful punchers in heavyweight history. For Haye to succeed, he needs to employ the Valuev strategy and run and run and run some more and hope to pot-shot his way to a decision (unlikely in Germany).

Radam G says:

Hehehehehe! That was funny, B-sug, my man! But never be fooled by size. It doesn't mean Jack in squared jungle warfare. If Haye is not a coward, his Redcoat behind has a prayer. If the former USSR Red Army doctor could fight, this bout would not have ever been made. This thing is a bumfest and is going to probably be a snoozefest. Doc WK is the hometown cooking favorite. Man, I'd loved to see a DRAW! Of course by double knockout. But wishful thinking. Enjoy the chumpfest. Hehehehehe! I gotta get on my gambling. Holla!

brownsugar says:

My thoughts exactly Condor... *****Radam size does make a difference if both combatants know how to box... and Wlad definitely knows how. But I see your point about the smaller fighter except Haye is no Pacman... he can't leap 5 feet from the outside..... land a killer shot and hop back out of the way like he was never there...lol.... ***** skill can beat size and while Haye is a smoother more natural fighter,.. Wlad is disciplined and well schooled...just saying there's not a wide margin between thier boxing abilities. The sad thing is Haye just indicated that he's done with Boxing after his title tiff tonight... when a guy retires before the fight has even started it's not a good sign... but I still wont' miss it... and I'm excited to see if he can at least check Wlads chin.

mortcola says:

He checked his chin. No problem. Wlad came back and strafed him. In the 12 round of a dull, one-sided fight in which Haye at least proved he has an effective defense as long as he attempts no offense.

brownsugar says:

That he did sir... WK is certainly not a cupcake whose going to fold after tasting a little leather... nearly any fighter on the planet HAS to fall when the perfect punch is thrown.. Haye couldn't get

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it.

Radam G says:

Post fight note: B-Sug, you will never get me on that "size matter" bandwagon. Then again, maybe you are right. In the history of all of pugilism, the smaller fighter has won 75 percent of the time, despite the myth of size. The small, mobile man is preferred over the big clumsy man, expect for hype imaging to pick the pockets of the fanfaronades. The SEALS team and every other team go for the smaller cat 75 percent of the time also. Just saying. Holla!