Written by Michael Woods
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The sober boxer looked so-so in his return to the ring May 7, against Alfonso Lopez. He got a win in his super middleweight debut, but his comeback may have hit a mean snag. (Hogan)

He has a fight set for September 6, but it's looking like Kelly Pavlik is still battling some of the outside-the-ring issues which have beset him in the last couple years.

Pavlik (37-2 with 29 KOs), the 29 year-old former middleweight champion from Youngstown, Ohio who has publicly sparred with the bottle, and went to rehab several times to address his drinking, will meet Detroit's Darryl Cunningham (23-2 with 10 KOs; age 36; winner of 15 straight against middling competition) at the Covelli Center in Youngstown. But press reports say he got some sparring in already, against his older brother Michael, age 35.

The Youngstown Vindicator reports that the two men fought on Friday, at the home belonging to their parents. That story said both men had been drinking, and that Pavlik had punched a door, and pulled his brother through a broken window.

Pavlik was in The Ranch Recovery Center in California for a 60-day stint last November 2010. He'd tried Betty Ford, also in California, before that, but stayed just 20 days in January 2010. Alarm bells rang when he told SI's Chris Mannix in February that he doesn't go to AA meetings because he doesn't need them, and wouldn't say that he'd never drink again.

Pavlik denied to a reporter for WYTV that he had been drinking before the fight with his brother, and didn't know why his brother told police that the boxer had been drinking.

Sometimes people have to hit bottom, bounce, and find a new low. Hopefully Pavlik won't have to, but anyone that has tangled with addiction problems knows that you have be super vigilant to change your ways. Structure, in the form of self help meetings, is generally seen as an aid in sticking to sobriety. Good luck, Kelly.

This release, about Pavlik's scheduled fight, came out today:

KELLY PAVLIK TO FIGHT IN YOUNGSTOWN!

Pavlik to Rumble with Darryl Cunningham

Saturday, August 6 at the Covelli Centre

Live on SHOWTIME®

***Tickets Go On Sale* This Friday!**

YOUNGSTOWN (July 12, 2011) – Former World Middleweight Champion and the pride of Youngstown, Ohio, **KELLY "The Ghost" PAVLIK** will headline a hometown fight card for the first time nearly two years when he takes on **DARRYL CUNNINGHAM** in a 10-round super middleweight battle, **Saturday, August 6,** at the **Covelli Centre** in downtown Youngstown. The fight will be televised live on **SHOWTIME** on a special edition of *ShoBox: The Next Generation*, beginning at **10:30 p.m. ET/PT** (delayed on the West Coast.)

Promoted by Top Rank, tickets to Pavlik vs. Cunningham, priced at $150 (ringside), $100 (VIP), $50 (Gold), and $25 (Silver), plus $2 facility fee, go on sale **This Friday! July 15,** at **10:00 a.m. ET.** Tickets can be purchased at www.Ticketmaster.com, and by calling

(800) 745-3000
. Tickets can also be purchased at the Covelli Centre box office, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET.

Pavlik (37-2, 32 KOs), knocked out undefeated defending champion Jermain Taylor in the seventh round of their epic 2007 fight to capture the world middleweight title. Pavlik successfully defended the title three times during his reign before losing it to 2010 Fighter of the Year Sergio Martinez three years later. This marks Pavlik's first fight in Youngstown since 2009 where he knocked out Miguel Espino in the fifth round to retain his world title. Pavlik returns to the ring fresh from a 10-round decision over Alfonso Lopez in the co-main event under the Manny Pacquiao-Shane Mosley world welterweight title fight on May 7. Pavlik is the World Boxing Council's (WBC) No. 1-rated super middleweight contender.

Cunningham (23-2, 10 KOs), of Detroit, enters this fight riding a three-year, 16-bout winning streak, including former world title challengers Antwun Echols and Rubin Williams, back-to-back last year, by knockout and unanimous decision, respectively.

For Pavlik vs. Cunningham fight week updates, log on to sports.SHO.com or www.toprank.com .

Comment on this article

Radam G says:

Danggit! I just hope that KP can hold it together. Holla!

the Roast says:

I root for KP to hold it together also. Did I ever tell you guys about the time the Ghost met the Roast? Oh yeah, I did. Those demons can be a bitch. I have mine. The demons have way better music and party girls, thats why they are hard to resist. Damn demons.

Radam G says:

YUP! The Roast, you told us about the time that you met KP. Did I tell you about the time that I got my peepee on Howard Cosell. Down goes peepee! Down goes peepee! Hehehehehe. Holla!