We hear Zab is listening to Sweatpea, not his father-trainer, and that bodes well for the newly-matured fighter comes Saturday.

I am not ready to put the kids' college fund on Zab Judah over Amir Khan this Saturday.

I know, I know, this is a brand new Zab. He's found God, and has his head on straight, and is a committed family man. I'm not trying to be a straight-on cynic, all that stuff is smashing storyline stuff, and I'm happy for him and his family.

Truly.

But I'm a show me type of guy. Til proven otherwise, to me, Zab Judah has always been less than the sum of his parts. The hand speed, the footwork, all that upside hasn't presented itself

often enough in the biggest of the big fights for me to be able to lean towards Judah over the Brit in Vegas.

He may be churchgoer of the month at his place of worship, and father of the year at his house, but until I see Judah (41-6 with 28 KOs; turns 34 in October) showing the same sort of strength of character in the ring as we've heard he's honed outside the ring in the last couple of years, well, I'll still likely go with the other guy in marquee fights involving Zab.

In step up fights, against Kostya Tszyu, Cory Spinks, Floyd Mayweather, Miguel Cotto and Joshua Clottey, Judah came out with an "L." Yes, he beat Cory Spinks in a rematch...but you recall how he lost to Carlos Baldomir in a stay-busy fight before the Mayweather gig.

Mentally, the kid hasn't been Klitschkoesque. He hasn't found ways to win, he's found, time and again, ways to lose. And until proven different, I foresee that happening again. History is always my GPS on these matters...

But...

But, I talked to his promoter Kathy Duva at the tail end of the Vitali Klitschko-Tomasz Adamek HBO lunch yesterday. And Kathy was darned sure that her guy, Zab, would get the W on Saturday.

She told me she never advises people to bet the house, or even Monopoly money, on her fighter. She's been in boxing forever, she knows that's not prudent.

But she told me this is a different human being. She told me that he used to train a week for a fight, forget to eat, basically go into the ring with his God-given talent and not much else. But six weeks with Pernell Whitaker, his new trainer, after six weeks with Sweetpea before his last fight, a TKO win over Kaizer Mbuza, has left Duva feeling quite confident that Khan (25-1 with 17 KOs; age 24) will be upset come Saturday.

I'm not ready to pick against Khan, however. I saw regression in his last fight, against Paul McCloskey. And I don't care if McCloskey is "awkward" or what have you. I want a guy I saw getting into pound for pound top ten territory in May 2010 off balance and off message.

But...

I'm seeing this fight as more of a pick 'em than I did. TSS Universe, what say you?

Comment on this article

DaveB says:

I didn't speak to Kathy Duva so she didn't put any doubts in my mind. I agree with your

thoughts about Judah knowing how to lose. To me he is a six round fighter. Some people do more with their God-given talent than they ever should, Boom Boom Mancini comes to mind, and other people never live up to their full potential, Howard Davis comes to mind. Judah will have to show me because figuratively I'm from Missouri. It will be great to see him try to prove me wrong or actually prove me wrong. I love these fights that you can get excited about.

mortcola says:

Said it before....Khan's talented, but fragile. Zab's chin can be cracked, and his focus and strength of character have failed him in some big fights - but I think this is a large step up for Khan, who will get hit, faster and from more angles than against Maidana - and I don't see Khan having the survival skills or mentality. Official pick - Zab by KO in a fight in which Khan has his moments.

Radam G says:

I don't like Super Zab's chances, even though my hommy and boy are in his corner. Holla!

Joe says:

I'm thinking that Sweet P will give better corner advise than Daddy simply throwing punches in the air w/o giving any instructions. Super has a chance that's for sure. "Con" isn't that good.

deepwater says:

Laying 50 on judah.what the hell. go ny!

the Roast says:

I'm looking forward to this one. I can see both fighters hitting the deck. Khan didnt look good in his last fight but no one noticed on the same night as Ortiz-Berto and JuanMa getting upset. Zab has been a flawed fighter but he seems more grounded now and he has to know that if he beats Khan he's gonna get a big payday with Ram Bradley. I like Khan in a close UD. Still, you never know. They have both been KTFO before.

GerardMcL says:

This is a mismatch and will be a wide decision for Khan.
Judah has gone into every fight with the 'what if?' factor. If he turns up in shape his skill will win the day, his speed will win if he is mentally ready, if if if if!

Judah hasn't won a significant fight since the Spinks rematch which was 6 years ago!! He is losing the speed and the skill, he has never had the mental ability and yet we're told he is in with a shout in this fight. I just don't see it. This is another Freddie Roach mismatch.

Khan looked clumsy against McCloskey because Khan for all his speed fights in straight lines.

He has to walk straight in or he is off balance. Judah had the skill to keep him off balance and dominate him but that was a long time ago. If Khan keeps him there till Rd6, Judah will tire, Khan will get closer and start to offlaod some of those very fast very strong shots.

michaelabii says:

Both guys dont fight too well on the inside especially Khan. Maidana was able to do damage only because Khans does not know what to do when his opponent gets close. Judah needs to close the gap to win this one and I dont know if he has the chops to do it. The skills, yes but the heart and desire of which he has been found wanting in the past ? Judah in my opinion is the more skilled of both fighters. By this I mean Judah can fight well on impulse because he just has it in him. Khan, sometimes reminds me of Hearns with his movement, speed and accuracy. If Judah really wants it and fights like he does by closing the gap with quick footwork and firing combos on the inside then I believe he could begin to make Khan ask serious questions of himself. Judahs not just that type of fighter though or at the very least he has not shown that "dog" exceptin the Cory Spinks fight and I am not a great fan of Cory Spinks fighting style.
Adios.

ultimoshogun says:

I pretty much agree with mortcola across the board, Judah might get rocked a couple times but I think he can KO the chinny Brit...Judah via KO 8rd.

michaelabii says:

[QUOTE=the Roast;8034]I'm looking forward to this one. I can see both fighters hitting the deck. Khan didnt look good in his last fight but no one noticed on the same night as Ortiz-Berto and JuanMa getting upset. Zab has been a flawed fighter but he seems more grounded now and he has to know that if he beats Khan he's gonna get a big payday with Ram Bradley. I like Khan in a close UD. Still, you never know. They have both been KTFO before.[/QUOTE]

I think Khan is really looking to make a statement here. All the signs point to a desire to stop Judah which he can do if he pressures Judah. Team Khans strategy will most likely involve keeping the pressure on Judah with jabs and combinations. On Paper this fight is Khans to lose. He is facing a fighter who tends to lose his composure under pressure. The big "if" is how has Judah changed mentally ? Has Pernell "seet pea" done enough to change Judahs mindset ? The key for Judah will be his willingness and ability to engage Khan on the inside which I believe is where Khan is at his weakest. I would like to see Judah fire blinding combos to Khans body and use his patented left uppercut which he used so effectively against Cotto. This means he has to get close to Khan and possibly eat some leather on the way there. An intruiging fight on many fronts: firstly, you have the New upcoming star versus the veteran storyline. Secondly, you have the fact that at 33 Jab has not been in any real damaging fights and so he still relatively fresh at 33.

the Roast says:

@michaelabii, I hear you on all points. All of these questions will be answered. We all find out soon!