

Dmitry Pirog: The Challenger in Waiting...HAUSER

Written by Thomas Hauser

Tuesday, 11 October 2011 14:32



Pirog hasn't truly capitalized on leaving Jacobs out on the mat. (Hogan)

The conventional wisdom is that there are no credible challengers to Sergio Martinez in the middleweight ranks. The conventional wisdom might be wrong.

Dmitry Pirog has a bogus belt. Martinez was stripped of the WBO title in 2010 so Danny Jacobs could fight (and beat) Pirog for the WBO crown. Dmitry upset the applecart by knocking out Jacobs in the fifth round and has successfully defended his title twice since then.

Forget Pirog's belt. But consider the fact that the 29-year-old Russian is 19-and-0 with 15 KOs. He has a good chin, power in both hands, and the ability to change styles from fight to fight. He's also intelligent, thoughtful, and dedicated to his craft.

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Given the opportunity to define himself, Pirog offered the following thoughts during a recent sitdown with The Sweet Science:

- * “A happy man is someone who loves what he does and makes money doing it. I’m not just boxing for the money. I’m also doing it because I like it.”
- * “For me, the best thing about being a fighter is that it has helped me to learn what is in me and to better understand myself.”
- * “I don’t have heroes. I don’t like to idolize any one person. It is more that I respect a type of person who has gone through great trials and found a way to succeed.”
- * “If I could go back in time, the two people I would most like to meet are Pyotr Velikiy [Peter the Great] and Ivan Grozni [Ivan the Terrible]. I have always been interested in the Tsars. I have read a lot about them in history books. Pyotr and Ivan were so important to the history of my country. I would like to find out for myself what they were like.”
- * “When the Soviet Union broke apart into many countries [in 1991], I was young but I understood what was happening. We didn’t worry at the time because we felt that it would bring more prosperity and democracy. But capitalism and democracy have moved more slowly than we thought they would.”
- * “When I was young, I watched tapes of Sugar Ray Leonard. I would have loved to fight him, to match my skills against the best. In my head, I had a plan to beat him. I knew that, after beating him, I’d be one of the best fighters in history, at least in my head.”
- * “When I fought Danny Jacobs, I could not leave the outcome of the fight to the judges. I understood that people with influence wanted him to win. When I knocked him out, wave after wave of emotion went through me until it was like a tornado of emotion. The same people who disrespected me before the fight continued to disrespect me afterward. But I respect myself and what I accomplished. That is the most important thing to me. Whether people liked the outcome of the fight or not, everybody saw what happened.”
- * “During a fight, I don’t feel the punches. After the fight, I feel all of them.”

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thouser@rcn.com. His most recent book (Winks and Daggers: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing) was published recently by the University of Arkansas Press.

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ali says:

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He beats anybody at 160...reminds me of a young James Toney

brownsugar says:

the russian mayweather would hand Sergio his first L

Radam G says:

Wow! I guess in the eyes of the beholder stands true, because Dmitry Pirog is just aight to me.
Holla!