Written by Michael Woods
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Fans of the American heavyweight scene have been focused on Seth Mitchell, the 29 year-old Maryland resident and ex footballer, in the last year or so, hoping that he has the goods to dethrone the Klitschkos. Mitchell (24-0-1 with 18 KOs), who gloves up on the Hopkins-Dawson II rematch on April 28 in Atlantic City, against Chazz Witherspoon, said he will leave it to others to call him the next great American heavyweight, but he says he feels confident he has the goods to get a title. He said he wants to get the win, but also do so impressively, to impress the fans and HBO.

"I do want to be impressive, I don't want my knockout streak to stop," he said on a Tuesday conference call to hype the tussle. He has won his last nine by stoppage; in his last outing, he stopped Timur Ibragimov on Dec. 10 (TKO2; first time the 30-4 Ibragimov has been stopped). He said he doesn't get paid by the round, and he's more than happy to get it done in one. He'd like to take his punishment in camp, not in fights, so he can make money, and leave the game

with his health intact.

Mitchell was asked if he is aware of the pressure, and knows that if he keeps winning, he gets a title crack. No, he said, he is keeping focused. He does think about it, but he keeps things in perspective.

Witherspoon (age 30; 30-2 with 22 KOs; born in Philly, living in NJ) was asked what a win means to him, being that he has dropped two step up fights. "A win would revitalize my career," he said, noting that boxing is cruel in that one or two losses can make people write you off. "In boxing you're kind of only as good as your last win." Is it is his last chance? It is important, he said, but he doesn't see the fight as his last chance.

"People have yet to see me at my best," he said. Everything came together with this fight, he said. He's at camp with Virgil Hunter in Oakland, the first time he's had such an opportunity. "I'm a man's man, I come to rumble," he said. He won't be scared of Mitchell, he said, and he will commit to his punches. Other men have fought Mitchell scared, he said. "My heart doesn't pump any Kool-Aid," Spoon said. He said his new managers, which include ex heavyweight champion Ken Norton, suggested Virgil Hunter, and this pleased Spoon, who had a list of three on his Wish List of trainers (Barry Hunter, Naazim Richardson and Hunter.) This five week camp, he said, has been solid. He's cleaned up some technical issues with Hunter. He roomed with Hunter's charge Andre Ward at the 2004 Olympics, he said, so the Hunter pairing makes sense.

Spoon's uncle is Larry Blackmon of the funk/R & B band Cameo ("Word Up!"), and he put the Norton connection into motion. "It all came together pretty fast," he said, for this fight.

Mitchell said he tries to throw 250 or so punches a round in training, so he'll have plenty of gas in the late rounds. "I'm not worried about going 12 rounds," he said. "The conditioning part is the furthest thing from my mind." He's sparred between 70-80 rounds, and will shoot for about 100.

Spoon noted that he turned pro after just three years of experience, as he started boxing in college. His amateur rise was swift, as opposed to Mitchell, whose pro ascent has been fast.

Mitchell said if you slice him open, you won't find a female dog in him, and that he thinks the same of Witherspoon. Witherspoon clarified that he wasn't knocking Mitchell's foes, or issuing a challenge to Mitchell.

The fighters were asked about the Klitschko brothers. Wlad is a really nice guy, said Spoon, who has been in camp with the younger brother. He trains really hard, and is a class act, who brings respect to the sport. Mitchell said Wlad is a class act, and he'd like to conduct himself the same way outside the ring when he snags a title. Wlad has one-shot power, "light switch power," and he'd like to own the same type power.

Golden Boy's David Itskowitch introduced Witherspoon, a cousin of ex heavyweight champ Tim Witherspoon. 'Spoon said he feels good, and feels blessed to get this opportunity. He said he's happy to be here. Itskowitch then introed Mitchell, the ex Michigan State University linebacker, who turned pro in 2008. Mitchell, living in Maryland, said he was excited for the bout, which he said would be a "good fight." This is his first bout set for 12 rounds, and he said he knew Spoon is training hard for the scrap. He noted that this event features two black American boxers who are also college grads. Spoon, who played basketball and track and went to St. Joseph's, and Mitchell both went against the grain, in that they didn't start boxing as a kid. Both said that the sports-education mix is a positive, because they both realize they can pull off big-time goals.

He said that the word on Spoon is he has lost his two step up fights, to Chris Arreola and Tony Thompson, and thus he will be training extra hard. Spoon said he does get it that he has more experience than Mitchell, but understands he is the underdog. He learned from the Arreola fight that things can change when you get buzzed. He learned how to deal when you get hit, and not get into "an all out war...I'm not that same fighter anymore."

Comment on this article

deepwater says:

I was going to say a comment but then thought who cares about this fight.

deepwater says:

hey bowe,golota,mercer,morrison,lewis,ibeauchi,holyfield,tyson, even jefferson and maurice harris I miss you guys

Radam G says:

Seth Mitchell is a marshmellow. He couldn't dethrone the Three Stooges if they were carrying the crown. And as for tomato-can Chazz Witherspoon, he doesn't have an iota of what his cousin, former two-time heavyweight king, Tim had. I'm with Deepwater on this one. Neither one of these chumped-up heavies can swim in deep or shallow waters. Holla!

alhmiel says:

This will be a great fight. Hope they both get better and put on a good show. America is hoping for a contender. No one else out there is any good. sad but I really hope one of these two steps up.