CURTIS STEVENS FIRES BACK AT AYALA

BROOKLYN - Curtis "Showtime" Stevens, 22-3, 16 KOs, was training for his upcoming fight with New Haven, CT middleweight Elvin Ayala, 26-5-1, 12 KOs, when he read what Ayala had to say about him on FightNews.com. Many of Ayala's comments sounded like typical pre-fight trash talk, but one remark struck a nerve in the New Yorker.

"He said that I'm no Arthur Abraham," Stevens recalled. "Well, I got news for him, I'm a bigger puncher than Abraham. I'm going to wear him down from round one to round ten. If I catch his ass early, it's going to be over for him. I believe he has to say things like he did to give himself motivation and confidence. So by telling a reporter that I'm nothing like Abraham, he was just

psyching himself up."

Stevens added,"He (Ayala) said he wasn't ready when he took the fight with Abraham, well he's had alot of time to prepare for me, so there better be no excuses when I beat him."

Ayala also said that he felt that the fight with Stevens was a good opportunity for him to gain some exposure and a was a route to bigger and better things. Stevens didn't like that comment either.

"Opportunity? I'm on NBC too," Stevens said. "It will give me a chance to showcase my big knockout skills, my great boxing ability. I'm ready for whatever happens. If the knockout comes or if I have to box him and cut him up and make him look stupid, so be it. I'm coming to win. I hope he comes and shows tools. I'm not John Mackey (Ayala's last opponent). He went nine rounds with John Mackey? Come on. I'd have taken Mackey cold out of his socks. I'm coming to win. I'm coming for blood, like a vampire."

And what does Stevens think about the home-state advantage Ayala will have for their fight at the Mohegan Sun in Uncasville, CT on January 19th?

"He's going to need the help," Stevens said. "I love going hostile. It gets me fired up. I love hearing the crowd cheer for the other guy. I like taking the crowd by surprise. Hometown advantage? He's going to need help, whether it's the doctor, the commission, the ambulance. He's going to need help from somebody."

Let the grudge fight begin.