

Ukraine's Vasyl Lomachenko Seeking to Make Pro History

Written by David A. Avila

Saturday, 22 February 2014 09:08



Subtle lines of anguish form around the face of Vasyl Lomachenko when the topic of the Ukraine surfaces.

While hundreds of people have died on both sides of massive demonstrations on the streets of Kiev, the two-time Olympic gold medalist continues his quest for excellence in the professional form of boxing. On March 1, Lomachenko (1-0) faces WBO featherweight titlist Orlando Salido (40-12-2, 28 Kos). Still, his country is in pain.

"I don't think it's the right thing when on both sides people are dying. But I cannot say who is wrong and who is right," said Lomachenko while in a boxing gym located in swank Marina Del Rey, Calif. "At this point, I don't like to comment who is wrong and who is right."

One thing he does know is the sport of fisticuffs. For the 26-year-old from Bilhorod-Dnistrovskyyi, trading punches comes as natural as riding a bicycle.

"The first time I put the gloves on and was boxing in the ring I was four years old. It was some kind of tournament in my hometown," he said.

Most people in the world are still very unaware of countries beyond the now torn down Iron Curtain. Places like Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan and other nearby nations are bastions for the

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sport of soccer and boxing. Not hockey or mixed martial arts as some people think. In those East European countries, boxing has a huge following.

Lomachenko said as a child he idolized Mike Tyson and Roy Jones Jr., not Wayne Gretzky. He was also advised that winning the Olympics was the most prestigious award in amateur boxing. So he won two gold medals.

Winning another gold medal would not add much more luster for the Ukrainian, but winning a world title as a professional would be considered a great feat. But despite having a phone book thick resume of amateur boxing accomplishments, no promoter believed he could make the jump from amateur to pro championship bout without a hiccup.

Lomachenko took one fight last October against Mexico's tough Jose Ramirez and won by fourth round technical knockout. That convinced Top Rank that he could possibly defeat a pro world champion.

"This kid is incredible," said Bob Arum. "He had a great amateur career with over 300 fights."

The current featherweight champion Salido is a Mexican rugged warrior who is often underestimated and usually makes those opponents pay dearly. Two wins over Puerto Rico's Juan Manuel Lopez and a recent knockout win over Orlando Cruz prove Salido cannot be overlooked.

"Orlando Salido knows a lot about fighting," said Ben Lira, who trains numerous boxers including Joseph Diaz. "He's a veteran who knows all of the tricks of the trade."

Salido lost to current WBO junior lightweight titlist Mikey Garcia, but even in defeat he took his pound of flesh with a questionable veteran move of launching a right cross and coming in with his head toward Garcia's head at the same time. Salido broke Garcia's nose with the maneuver. Will Lomachenko be ready for those kinds of tactics?

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"Both of my sparring partners are Mexicans in the same weight class and with the same style. It's been my preparation for this fight," says Lomachenko.

Lomachenko regrets only one thing about the fight scheduled for Saturday March 1, in San Antonio, Texas.

"I'm surprised to be fighting for a world title in my second fight because I was aiming to fight for the world title in my first bout," said Lomachenko with a chuckle. "Why did they have to wait until my second fight?"

We'll see if it was worth the wait.

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deepwater2 says:

VI by ko. Very very exciting fighter to watch

Radam G says:

Ditto, deepwater2!

Sweet dream, Salido! He is gonna get KTFO easily and likely early. There is little escaping of V-Lo's nuclear weapons of mass destruction. Holla!

amayseng says:

They had a quick preview of VL on hbo tonight, holy **** does he have some fast hands. Ridiculous...

I am a Salido fan, but he may take a thumping this fight.

brownsugar says:

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Lomanchenko has the pedigree to outbox Salido handily. Salido has been out boxed by less technically proficient fighters in the past.... I'm backing off my earlier prediction.. I still think Lomanchenko will at least win a decision or possibly get a late round TKO. But I can't imagine Salido getting blown out of the water...no way!.

BFF says:

im going to call it mid roundish5-7 tko win for VL!

The_King_AJ says:

The Fight - it's not a round for round breakdown, it's a summary

If you want to discuss further, we shall discuss further and get as technical as possible.

Early Rounds:

Lomachenko likes to test his opponents early in his fights to see how they respond. Salido stated he's going to go hard from the first round, so we're not going to see a VERY aggressive version of Vasyl in the first rounds but rather in a relatively counterpunching mode. Although we will see him being quite aggressive at times, flicking the switch from defence to offence to test Salido and learn about him, as Lomachenko likes to get on the offense to learn about the fighters (from subtle things like their alertness, to their gameplan and anticipating the way they move). He'll do this in a slower process than the ams obviously. It's brutal knowing that Lomachenko has even more time to think about things at the pros. When Salido does not come forward with significant pressure, this is where we'll see Vasyl be even more offensive and maybe even get a knockdown or two as Vasyl is just a raw, complete fighter who's very quick to NOTICE and capitalise on openings of the opponent.

Mid Rounds:

Lomachenko will really start to become more aggressive now as he's going to be using what he's learned about Salido's general movement. Loma will create traps more readily and you'll see the sly side of Lomachenko who programmes Salido into walking into one of his bigger general powershots. Salido in particular, the dude can get into no-mans land at times you know with his positioning lol Loma will take advantage of the lack of balance that results. I see a potential uppercut landing which'll knock Salido down. Salido will probably get quite frustrated and will charge like a crazed goat absent thought to hasten victory, and end up getting KO'd.

If Loma doesn't land a straight left, or if he steps towards the right side of his opponent, he REALLY IS going to land a big right hand to the body. Salido is slow to react to a change in direction, this is going to work very well in Loma's favour. Salido needs to be wary of this and anticipate Loma's movement here and throw something to disrupt Loma here. A right uppercut to the left hand side of Loma's body would be a particularly good idea until Lomachenko adapts with a right.

I honestly think it's very, very possible for Lomachenko to land the same shot that he landed on Ramirez that knocked him out I feel Salido really is vulnerable to this **** lool

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We could really see a knockout here.

Late Rounds:

If Lomachenko wants to engage and take a shot to land one, he'll land with many and they will rock and perhaps even stop Salido. Salido is not going to get the upperhand in their infighting exchanges. Just let that idea go, guys. We might not see exchanges like the ones I'm talking about very often throughout the fight as even the most athletic fighters would gas, and I don't feel Lomachenko would choose to, but we'll see this more in the late rounds though and eventually we're going to see Lomachenko do a Rigo and just run and hold his way to victory if Salido still poses threat. Things were getting difficult for Mikey Garcia because of his lack of inside game.

I've never seen/don't recall an overhand right landing to Lomachenko's head, which is supposed to be Salido's house speciality.

Don't overrate Salido's ability to come forward. He's not the sort of pressure fighter that Mayweather beat when he fought the high volume DLH. Salido is NOT relentless from start to finish, and Lomachenko has expertly dealt with the sort of pressure that Salido usually provides in like 6 rounds of Salido's fights. I don't know where people got that impression that he's a constantly relentless guy.

Recently, Elie Seckbach noticed that Vasyl's stamina is unbelievable, and Elie is always at boxing gyms watching fighters.

If you guys think Loma is going to get discouraged by dirty fighting, you are incredibly wrong. Loma can get ugly too, and some of his opponents in the amateurs were fucking Tazmanian devils.

Nevertheless, Salido should provide threats...Faux AlBernstein's keys to victory (Salido)

- Salido must land the right hand shots to the body. Whenever Selimov came in, he'd introduce his inside game with a right hand to Loma's body, it does tend to land quite frequently. Salido might as well load occasionally when he feels he has the time to do so.

- One good thing about Salido is that he doesn't defend himself with just the high guard with gloves tightly covering the head and the elbows pretty much together. Vasyl owns his opponents to the body when his opponents do that.

- It's not easy to land body shots on Salido i.e the sort of body shots that Lomachenko lands on a regular.

- Salido must have a watchful eye over the times when Loma has his concentration lapse. He will be off guard. One big *** combination will affect Lomachenko. Courtesy of Salido's

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intelligence when it comes to combinations on the inside, he can land and land well.

- Salido has a level of awkwardness which can definitely land on Loma and provide problems, so we should see Loma's chin tested. Loma's not the biggest fan of awkwardness but I'm really overplaying it here to give Salido the benefit of the doubt.

- Salido shouldn't allow himself to get overly anxious, he MUST play the patient game otherwise Salido will be KTFO. Lomachenko is more clinical than Mikey and Juanma and Salido is not going to get away with half of the **** he got away with when facing them. Reset your position often and keep patience. Loma will switch from counterpunching to offence too. His counter punching alone is going to cause trouble but when Lomachenko flicks that switch, Salido better calm himself.

- Pressure. Salido isn't going to provide the sort of pressure that you think he is, so the key here is for him to take the contents of the black bottle that Aaron Pryor was taking against Arguello, the one that the trainer 'mixed', that **** will keep Salido going. Lomachenko may end up throwing fewer punches, and if he lands too few he can risk losing the round (although come on, when does Lomachenko lose a round?). (Lomachenko is not the guy that throws a lot of punches like your typical amateur fencer). An example of what I'm talking about here is his round 4 (I think) against Bashenov. Speaking of Bashenov, this is a good example where we can get ideas of how Loma will deal with Salido at range.

- Siri you are pretty **** on the outside at this level, but tbh this is a losing battle anyways

- There's no point of telling you to try and move around the ring anti-clockwise cos you're gonna get owned either way, Loma is too complete.

- Pray Lomachenko doesn't 'rise to the occasion' and gets overwhelmed by it all, but he's the most consistent fighter of ALL TIME so you'd be lucky as hell if he didn't 'arrive' on the night

.

That's just advice Siri, you can do whatever the **** you wanna do.

Verdict:

Lomachenko UD or TKO. 'Siri'ously doee Salido is a tough SOB so its going to be hard to say Loma will 100% win by KO although I think it is a highly likely. It's up to Salido if he wants to make it a difficult fight for Lomachenko. I do feel he can make the fight difficult.

I hope you've been able to appreciate that although I'm rooting for Loma, I still try to give as much weighting to Salido as possible, even giving him the benefit of the doubt. I'm neutral in my analysis of fighters.

A loss would make Loma focus on being even more cerebral (he's already a genius), I actually think a loss is a blessing in disguise, but its not gonna happen.

Bernie Campbell says:

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Mr avilla, seems like yer always goin on aboutwhatshot and youadress whats not! Lets notpromote sh,,, thatwe don't know which way! Lets discertate Ustinovand why don they lettum go! What aboutDimmitrenko!Pleasedont keep more onning! Howsabout Abrilif you wanna talk smaller!

Radam G says:

OMG! B-Camp is back! And now where is the Shadow? Holla!

ultimoshogun says:

Looking forward to watching Lomachenko for the first time. I remember someone in an earlier thread mention that the word around the campfire was that Lomachenko isn't packing much dynamite in his hands, so things could get interesting against a guy like Salido.

deepwater2 says:

I've been watching vl since first Olympics . He will be the most talked about fighter in recent times. There will be calls to match him against mayweather by his 3-4 th fight at 140 -145 lbs. vl by ko or ref will stop it. The Johnny walker platinum will be brought out with a fine Cohiba siglo to help celebrate a new exciting era in boxing . Floyd era is almost over !

The_King_AJ says:

[QUOTE=deepwater2;44646]I've been watching vl since first Olympics . He will be the most talked about fighter in recent times. There will be calls to match him against mayweather by his 3-4 th fight at 140 -145 lbs. vl by ko or ref will stop it. The Johnny walker platinum will be brought out with a fine Cohiba siglo to help celebrate a new exciting era in boxing . Floyd era is almost over ![/QUOTE]

Lomachenko has actually fought 140lbbers before in the amateurs btw.

I actually watched a fight today which was a fight from 2011 against Berinchyk who is a light welterweight 2011 World amateur champion and 2012 Olympic Silver medalist. The difference in size was the Olympic, 118lb Rigondeaux and the 126lb featherweight in Gamboa.

That fight is virtually equivalent to watching Rigondeaux vs Gamboa as Berinchyk is as great as Gamboa, and Rigo is virtually as great as Loma.

Lomachenko won the fight.

deepwater2 says:

[QUOTE=The_King_AJ;44684]Lomachenko has actually fought 140lbbers before in the amateurs btw.

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Lomachenko won the fight.[/QUOTE]

Cool I am going try and YouTube it . Thanksk . Vl is once in a generation talent

The Shadow says:

[QUOTE=The_King_AJ;44684]Lomachenko has actually fought 140lbbers before in the amateurs btw.

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Very interesting. But better believe, Rigo is not "virtually as great." He's far better than VL. Gambia can't even lace Rigo's boots or tape his hands for that matter.

amayseng says:

Gamboa does he still fight?

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King Beef says:

[QUOTE=amayseng;44690]Gamboa does he still fight?[/QUOTE]

not as much since he made the mistake of signing with 50

The_King_AJ says:

[QUOTE=The Shadow;44688]Very interesting. But better believe, Rigo is not "virtually as great." He's far better than VL. Gambia can't even lace Rigo's boots or tape his hands for that

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Rigo isn't far better than V.L, Id pick V.L over Rigo and almost anyone in history in an amateur setting or WSB setting. The only fighter I think is possibly better than VL is SRL from the amateurs but even then I have doubts. Gamboa is no way as good as Rigo of the amateurs, but Berinchyk is as accomplished as Gamboa.

The Shadow says:

[quote=the_king_aj;44891]rigo isn't far better than v.l, id pick v.l over rigo and almost anyone in history in an amateur setting or wsb setting. The only fighter i think is possibly better than vl is srl from the amateurs but even then i have doubts. Gamboa is no way as good as rigo of the amateurs, but berinchyk is as accomplished as gamboa.

hahahahahahahahahahaha, oh my goodness!

The Shadow says:

You sound like you watch a lot of amateur boxing, by the way. What are your thoughts on Roberto Balado?

The Shadow says:

[QUOTE=Radam G;44634]OMG! B-Camp is back! And now where is the Shadow? Holla![/QUOTE]

RG, I s wondering where he went so I went to his post history. I just now saw his comment and I'm screaming and crying over here....Ustinov?! "Discertate?"

That's vintage B-Camp right there!!

Speaking of which, I wouldn't be shocked if this was our man:
[url]http://www.amazon.com/Human-Evolution-Introduction-Mans-Adaptations/dp/020202024X