

## Next For Prodnikov Could Be Demarco, NOT Rios

Written by Michael Woods

Wednesday, 26 February 2014 16:20

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Ruslan Provodnikov is a VIP, a very important fighter, in the grand scheme of things.

No, not because he fights in a fan-friendly manner, one easy to digest and appreciate by the mass of boxing fans. But more so because he is Exhibit A of what can happen if you keep on soldiering, keep on gloving up, saying yes to fights while becoming a mainstay on a Triple A field, like ESPN's "Friday Night Fights."

Provodnikov (23-2) looked to be the sort who'd always have a home on ESPN, but would only likely get called up to the bigs, to HBO or Showtime, as a B side assignment to boost the record of a future star.

And if the 30-year-old is not a "star" now, he's darn sure on my short list of boxers who I keep track of, and want to know when they're fighting next, and against who. That said, I checked in with Ruslan's promoter, Arthur Pelullo.

He told me that a planned Provodnikov-Brandon Rios faceoff is all but dead, and that instead, he's keen on having The Siberian Rocky glove up June 14, probably against Antonio DeMarco.

He said that Bob Arum, who is co-promoting Ruslan's next fight, because he got an option to do so based off Provodnikov's faceoff against Timothy Bradley, in the 2013 BWAA Fight of the Year last March, is down with DeMarco. "But HBO won't do it, they want to wait for the results of the Thomas Dulorme-Karim Mayfield fight on March 29. They'd like Ruslan to fight the winner."

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Pelullo doesn't love that plan and would still like to convince HBO to go with his and Arum's plan. "You never know how things come out, we don't want to wait," he said. "It's a terrible thing to wait. What happens if someone gets cut or hurt in the Delorme-Mayfield fight, and can't go forward? There are a lot of variables."

Ruslan last tangled in October, when he stopped Mike Alvarado in Colorado, Alvie's home turf, and took the man's WBO title.

As for the Ruslan-Rios pairing, Pelullo said that Rios' past scale fails make him too much of a wildcard. "Unless Rios makes 140, it's dead," he said. Rios has said he'd be willing and able to do that, but Pelullo isn't buying it. He said that Arum, Rios' promoter, cannot ensure that Rios can make junior welter. "I can't take that chance with Ruslan's career," said Pelullo, who is counting down to Saturday, when his boxer, Brayan Vera, fights Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. in a rematch, on HBO.

Pelullo said that coming off two losses in a row, having tested positive for a banned substance in his last bout, against Manny Pacquiao, Rios is more trouble than he's worth. "I don't need that craziness in my life," he stated.

UPDATED THURSDAY AM: Brandon Rios checked in with me, standing up for himself. He said that Pelullo isn't in his life, so he's not suitable to judge the degree of lunacy therein. "There's no point talking about this fight because it's not going to happen," Rios said. "Yes, I can make 140, Bob don't know what he's saying. And it's funny because his manager is still talking like I was the one that wanted this...Ruslan Tweeted me and said that he would like to fight me."

My take: I like to see fighters who are willing to fight five times a year, guys like Provodnikov, do so. Waiting to see the other shoe fall often results in nothing but delay. How about Provodnikov fight ASAP, and then get the winner of that Dulorme-Mayfield tiff?

Regarding Vera and Junior, Pelullo is hopeful that we don't see a scale fail from Cheech on Friday. The contracted poundage max is 168, he said, and Junior will have to pay out a chunk, which Pelullo wouldn't disclose, if he is over. The promoter said he's been seeing promotional

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footage of Junior wearing plastic to shed water weight, so he's a tad bit worried. And what would he do if Junior was several pounds over? "It would be up to Vera," he said. "But I'd tell him not to fight."

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### **Carmine Cas says:**

Very nice summation of Provodnikov's rise to the B+ A- side, personally I'd love to see him fight Rios because that would be a war. DeMarco is also a good fight as well, I haven't really seem him fight since the Broner fight I wonder if he made any tactical adjustments since.

And fighting the winner of the Dulorme-Mayfield fight is completely logical, what's the deal HBO?

Will Cheech ever get his act together?

### **The Good Doctor says:**

[QUOTE=Carmine Cas;44534]Very nice summation of Provodnikov's rise to the B+ A- side, personally I'd love to see him fight Rios because that would be a war. DeMarco is also a good fight as well, I haven't really seem him fight since the Broner fight I wonder if he made any tactical adjustments since.

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Will Cheech ever get his act together?[/QUOTE]

You are right about Rios, it would be a war. Call me a bit crazy, but if he got in there with Provodnikov he could end up losing his career and changing his life permanently down the road. Rios has been in 4 brutal fights consecutively, clearly lost his last 2 and you can make a strong argument for him losing 3 of 4 (Abril beat him IMO). Getting in there with the Russian could be a cherry on top of what has proven to be a gauntlet of punishment. It is kind of a poor man's version of the streak of brutality Cotto had when in a 7 fight span he fought Zab, Shane, Clotey, Margarito, and Pac.

### **stormcentre says:**

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Oh man.

Provodnikov would walk right though Antonio DeMarco.

They must be offering Antonio DeMarco good money

### **amayseng says:**

[QUOTE=The Good Doctor;44544]You are right about Rios, it would be a war. Call me a bit crazy, but if he got in there with Provodnikov he could end up losing his career and changing his life permanently down the road. Rios has been in 4 brutal fights consecutively, clearly lost his last 2 and you can make a strong argument for him losing 3 of 4 (Abril beat him IMO). Getting in there with the Russian could be a cherry on top of what has proven to be a gauntlet of punishment. It is kind of a poor man's version of the streak of brutality Cotto had when in a 7 fight span he fought Zab, Shane, Clottey, Margarito, and Pac.[/QUOTE]

I concur

### **Skibbz says:**

Ruslan is only just on his way back from the Sochi Olympics and he sort of ballooned up in weight - but not extremely and who can really blame him. After his two recent fights his game has stepped up considerably. He is now a world champ and his fan base is growing. Vadim K and Artie have told me that ideally they're looking to keep Provo at 140, let him make a few defences and then move up when things clear up north of the border.

The rios fight was never likely to happen because Freddie had warned Ruslan that to get in the ring so soon after he was pissing black liquid out of his system would cause serious long term damage. He was always going to take a few extra months off. Arum is interested in provodnikov and too much for my personal liking. Ruslan has been my favourite boxer since he destroyed Jose Roman back in 08. He's finally achieved his dream of being around and able to fight with the elite fighters of today but with Arum in the picture I see his career being shorter than what it could be. Artie needs to keep a jaw lock on Provodnikov and maneuver him away from the tall grass where arum wants him. Arum wants to mince and rinse provodnikov for all the money he can as soon as he can without a thought for his real long term future.

A fight against de Marco is better but provodnikov still wins easy. The only guys that give him problems are those with long reaches and above average boxing abilities. However he's improved much since his debut and he has good amateur experience fighting over 150 fights. He now knows what it takes to be a world class lebel fighter in terms of fitness and training. He knows what the fans love and he's all too willing to go out and give them that display of courage ferocity and pure will to win that everyone in the audience can appreciate and cheer for. With Freddie Vadim and Artie behind him he can - I hope - become a world star. I hope he goes onto having 40+ fights atleast but how likely that is to happen I don't know yet currently but provodnikov is certainly determined to remain a boxer for as long as he can.

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On the mayfield fight, mayfield has said that he would fight provod and he'd teach him a lesson... To that I can only quote what Mike Tyson said, "everybody has a plan till they get punched in the mouth." It couldn't be more true with provodnikov. He will come forward throwing shots with such power it takes all his opponents by surprise. The only man to defeat him was Herrera who out boxed him and kept him on the outside very well. Chop Chop Corley also did the same for 12 rounds but he fought in Russia and Can't argue with the judges scorecards.. But both boxers took a violent maulling at ruslan's hands for their troubles. Mayfield will have to be able to keep an even better technically and physically fitter Mansi warrior off him and i don't think he can. Ruslan will bulldoze right through him.

### **Carmine Cas says:**

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Yeah that fight could cut Rios career short and hurt him for good. Abril did beat him too but he lacked the power to sway the judges and also Arum's vested interest in Rios at the time.

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Cotto's career change started after the Margarito fight (who IMO was loading his gloves)

I hear Provodnikov might fight local fighter Chris Algeri, that would be interesting.

### **ultimoshogun says:**

I agree with stormcentre...DeMarco is gonna get wrecked.

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