

NOTE: ESPN To Screen Klitschko-Leapai on April 26

Written by The Sweet Science
Tuesday, 22 April 2014 14:50



Two World Heavyweight Championship Fights in Two Weeks Live Exclusively on ESPN, ESPN Deportes; Wladimir Klitschko vs. Alex Leapai on April 26 Bermene Stiverne vs. Chris Arreola May 10

ESPN and ESPN Deportes will televise two World Heavyweight Championship fights within two weeks, Wladimir Klitschko (61-3, 52 KOs) vs. Alex Leapai (30-4-3, 24 KOs) on Saturday, April 26 from the König-Pilsener-Arena in Oberhausen, Germany, and, as previously announced, Bermene Stiverne (23-1-1, 20 KOs) vs. Chris Arreola (36-3, 31 KOs) on Saturday, May 10 from the USC Galen Center in Los Angeles, both live and exclusive in the U.S.

The 12-round fight between WBA, IBF, and WBO World Heavyweight Champion Klitschko and challenger Leapai will air at 5 p.m. ET on ESPN and ESPN Deportes' *Noche de Combates (Fight Night)*. Two weeks later, the WBC World Heavyweight Championship fight for the vacant title and rematch between top-rated Stiverne and Arreola will air at 8 p.m. on ESPN and ESPN Deportes' *Noche de Combates*.

That fight will be presented by Corona Extra. Both fights will also be available on computers, smartphones, tablets, Amazon Fire TV, Apple TV, Xbox and Roku via WatchESPN.

"We are thrilled to have ESPN televise this great one-two combination of World Heavyweight title fights," ESPN senior director of programming & acquisitions Brian Kweder said. "The winners of these two fights will be on a collision course for the potential unification of the Heavyweight title. With fighters like Deontay Wilder, Mike Pérez, Bryant Jennings and Tyson Fury all waiting in the wings, the Heavyweight division is poised for a major comeback."

Commentators:

[Joe Tessitore](#) and [Teddy Atlas](#) will call Klitschko vs. Leapai for ESPN, while Delvin Rodríguez and [Pablo Viruega](#) will call the action for ESPN Deportes' *Noche de Combates*. Two weeks later, Tessitore and Atlas will call the Stiverne vs. Arreola bout, while studio host

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[Todd Grisham](#)

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[@GrishamESPN](#)

) will present boxing news and highlights on site. Viruega and

[David Faitelson](#)

will call Stiverne vs. Arreola for

Noche de Combates

, while

Leopoldo González

and

Claudia Trejos

will anchor the on-site studio. Bilingual reporter

Bernardo

Osuna

(

[@osunaespn](#)

) will present live interviews and reports for both networks

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About the Fights:

Klitschko, of the Ukraine, who will be making his 16th title defense and fighting in his 25th World Heavyweight Championship bout, scored a unanimous decision over Alexander Povetkin in his last fight. Klitschko has held a Heavyweight title longer than anyone in boxing history (IBF, 2006-present) other than Joe Louis (nearly 12 years). He has made the third-most title defenses in Heavyweight history, trailing only Louis (25) and Larry Holmes (20). His challenger, Leapai, a native of Samoa living in Australia, is coming off a November unanimous decision upset win over Denis Boytsov.

Stiverne and Arreola were chosen to fill the vacant WBC title after Wladimir Klitschko's older brother Vitali vacated the title to pursue his political career in the Ukraine. Stiverne and Arreola will not only battle for the vacant WBC World Heavyweight title, but also to become the first boxers of Haitian or Mexican descent to hold a Heavyweight title. [Read more on Stiverne vs. Arreola.](#)

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oubobcat says:

I know this is not a highly thought of fight but it is great to see ESPN making a deeper push into covering boxing. I really hope that this is the start of more expansive coverage on the sport by ESPN and not just a temporary thing to fill some programming. ESPN is obviously in a lot more homes than HBO or Showtime and if they suddenly start taking more interest in the sport can only lead to good things.

ArneK. says:

I'll be tuning in on Saturday, but this looks like another stroll in the park for Wladimir who hasn't lost a fight in 10 years. I'm reminded that a lot of people expected a humdinger the last time a Samoan fought for the title, but the Lennox Lewis -David Tua fight was a one-sided affair devoid of the anticipated fireworks.

Polynesians excel on the gridiron, but in the squared circle seemingly can't get over the hump, witness guys like Jimmy Thunder, Samson Pou'ha, and Paea Wolfgramm.

The Commish says:

Ya' gotta' love that ESPN is gonna' be showing both of the upcoming heavyweight title fights.

Ya' just gotta' love it!

-Randy G.

the Roast says:

Got to set the DVR for this. Something tells me I'll be fast forwarding after the 6th just to see if there is a knockdown. Just like that Quillen fight from last Sat. God bless the DVR.

deepwater2 says:

I love my DVR. Shannon Briggs may be out of his mind and desperate for a payday but I have to agree with him when he told Leapai he is a bum. Hopefully Leapai can pull a Corrie Sanders or a Brewster. I think Leapai was handpicked by K2 because Klit can't really clinch this guy to death, Klit can stay at the end of his jab and drop bombs on him. If he clinches this guy the mans face might be in Klits cup. knock this guy out for goodness sake Klit.

The Commish says:

Exactly, Deep.

After his last fight--against Alexander Povetkin--in which Klit initiated the astounding amount of 171 clinches in 12 rounds, I knew it was time to bring the curtain down on the younger Klitschko, who is a huge draw in Germany and a huge bore to American fans. He is so much of

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a bore that I am surprised ESPN is even bothering to show what should be a blowout for Wlad.

I guess that's because they are following this fight two weeks later with what should be a very interesting battle between Bermane Stiverne v Cris Arreola for the vacant WBC Heavyweight Championship. The winner will then make his first defense later this year against Big D--Deontay Wilder.

It was just Easter. With the upcoming Stiverne-Arreola fight and with Bryant Jennings v Mike Perez coming up, boxing is now celebrating its own version of Easter--the heavyweight division coming back from the dead.

-Randy G.