

Written by Michael Woods
Thursday, 31 July 2014 13:53



I chatted with a source at Top Rank on Friday morning, and asked if it is likely or not that a Provodnikov-Bradley rematch gets made, especially in the very near term. Money would be an impediment, perhaps, with pieces of pie needing to be split among Ruslan, Banner, Bradley and Top Rank, was the takeaway I got from that quick chat. So, bottom line what are the chances we see Provodnikov-Bradley II in 2014? "Slim," I was told. I got the sense maybe that the prospect for a Miguel Cotto-Tim Bradley fight in December is better than "slim," for the record.

Knowing what I do about human nature, and his demeanor, I do think that whoever gloves up with **Ruslan Provodnikov** next better be at his very best, and expecting a dialed-in and fully focused Siberian Rocky.

So, who gets that maybe unenviable task, the fight after the one in which he dropped **Chris Algieri** twice in round one, but then allowed the New Yorker to get back in the bout, and take a decision, in Brooklyn?

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Who is the next poor sap, er, opponent, who will be on the other end of Provodnikov's unleashed fury, which stems from his belief that he beat Algieri, and the America treated the event as more track meet than boxing match?

I posed the question to "Rocky's" promoter, Philly-based **Arthur Pelullo**. The dealmaker, who in one of the savvier moves of the year, hedged his bets, and got Algieri promoter

Joe DeGuardia

to cut him in a significant percentage of earnings from Algieri's next couple fights, clued TSS on the plan for Provodnikov.

"I am working on getting Ruslan a November date," Pelullo told me. Provo has become a recent **HBO** fave, no surprise since the man fights in the manner hewing to their current braintrust's imprimatur, which is the securing of the services of men who seek to *fight* more than engage in majestic applications of the sweet science. So, have Pelullo and HBO narrowed down a list of potentials? "Yes, the winner of the Brandon Rios-Diego Chaves fight, and also Mauricio Herrera," Pelullo said.

Rios tangles with Chaves on Saturday in Vegas, and on HBO, in a fight seen in some circles as coin flip affair. And who does Pelullo think gets the W there? "I think Rios," he said. "I want to put Ruslan in the biggest fight possible," he continued.

Speaking of that biggest fight possible. In talking with Freddie Roach, I gleaned that it was looking likely that if Ruslan had beaten Algieri, the date with **Manny Pacquiao** Algieri snagged, on Nov. 22, would have been his for the taking. So, harkening back to where I started, about the possibility that Ruslan will be wickedly honed for this next tangle. You don't think Ruslan might be a tad peeved that like \$4 million slip through his fingers?

Another thought popped into my head while mulling Ruslan's next. Provodnikov and **Timothy Bradley**

engaged in a violent classic when they butted heads, fists and wills in March 2013. Bradley was almost out early and late, but summoned a reserve of energy from Lord knows where, and was able to make it to the final bell, so he could enjoy a unanimous decision win in the 2013 Boxing Writers Association of America Fight of the Year.

UPDATED FRI: Ideas For Provodnikov's Next..Rios-Chaves Winner, Herrera..And Maybe Bradley

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Being that Bradley is looking for a bout, after last gloving up in April, and losing a UD12 to Manny Pacquiao, does it not make sense for Provodnikov and Bradley to reacquaint themselves to each other?

Both coming off losses, both presumably aching to prove their worth in this what-have-ya-done lately? business...

Talk to me, fight fans. Is a Provodnikov-Bradley rematch the best option for both men next? Or you like the winner of Rios-Chaves for the Siberian ex champ? Or you think the talented but unheralded Herrera is most deserving of a slot in a main event? Weigh in!

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The Commish says:

I have to believe that Brandon Rios is going to be ultra-impressive in his upcoming bout against Diego "I Just Got My Visa" Chaves. Rios said his new weight division is Welterweight.

"I'm a 147-pounder now, and that's where I am going to stay," he told Gerry Cooney & me on our SiriusXM show on Monday.

"I killed myself to make 140. I don't kill myself to make 147. I feel strong at the weight."

With that, expect Rios to take care of business this weekend against Chaves, judging by the impressive training camp Rios had, perhaps his best ever. Following the Chaves fight, I'd love to see him face Ruslan Provodnikov. The fight could not be anything less than a top candidate for "Fight of the Year" honors. No running. No mauling. No clinching. Just brawling.

Let Rios first take care of business against the tough Diego Chaves.

Then: Rios-Provodnikov.

Let's get it on!

-Randy G.

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ArneK. says:

Another candidate for Provodnikov will emerge in a few weeks when two undefeated welterweights clash at the StubHub Center in Carson, California: Akron's Shawn Porter (24-0-1) vs. England's Kell Brook (32-0). From 147 to 160 pounds, there's an abundance of talent.

oubobcat says:

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I do think Rios-Chaves is going to be a fight of the year candidate. It may even end up being fight of the year. These guys both prefer to stand in front of their opponents and bang. It will be a fun fight while it lasts.

I personally favor Chaves and a big reason is he is the much bigger man entering the ring. Chaves has fought his whole career at Welterweight. Rios started at Junior Lightweight, fought most his career at Lightweight and only recently came to Jr. Welterweight and now Welterweight. Chaves is a big puncher for a Welterweight too. I don't think Rios' punches will have the same impact at Welterweight and I don't think he will take punches as well from a big punching natural Welterweight. I see Rios getting broken down in a barn burner. We will see Saturday.

As for Provodnikov, facing the winner of this fight is natural. Herrera would also be a good fight and a natural rematch. Either option I would love to see. I think Bradley is angling for bigger fish but if he doesn't get that fight he wants he'd be another option. And why not, they already fought in one fight of the year. So all three options would be great for us fans for Provodnikov next.

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