

Snips and Snipes 8 November 2017

The heavyweights have been hogging the news a bit lately. We have had the big event on Cardiff where over 70,000 turned out to watch Anthony Joshua beat Carlos Takam and we had the show in New York at the weekend which did boxing no good at all. Both heavyweight fights-Joshua vs. Takam and Deontay Wilder vs. Bermane Stiverne –featured substitutes coming in to challenge champions but there the resemblance ends. Takam put up a good fight and to some extent showed that Joshua is still a work in progress and will have given Joshua some indication of areas in which he can and will need to improve. Stiverne was pathetic but then why should anyone be surprised. He had his 39th birthday on the first of this month, had not had a fight since November 2015 and when he fought Wilder in January 2015 he lost by 9, 11 and 13 points and all he has done since then is get older. In fairness he had been training for a fight with Dominic Breazeale but finished up fighting Wilder with insufficient time to prepare and all of that showed as CompuBox did not register Stiverne landing a single punch in the 2:59 the fight lasted.

It was a WBC title fight and Mauricio Sulaiman was in the ring fitting a WBC T-shirt over Wilder's head to publicise the fact it was WBC when he should have been hiding after such a farce in one of their title fights. It was certainly nothing to take pride in. In their defence they could point to the substitute factor as a reason for such an abysmal title fight but that does not excuse them having Stiverne No 1 in their ratings when he not had a fight for two years.

Wilder showed his contempt for Stiverne as an opponent. I don't like to see a fighter show that degree of contempt but there was a lot of rage in there over the way his career just seems to stumble along from one frustration to the next. Wilder has been a pro for nine years and a champion for almost three years and has yet to have a fight that has created even 10% of the interest, entertainment and drama that the Joshua vs. Wlad Klitschko generated. No wonder he is angry and frustrated.

There is talk now of Joshua vs. Joseph Parker but at the same time there is also ongoing negotiations for Parker to defend his WBO title against Lucas Browne although Browne is not currently in the WBO ratings. The Alex Povetkin vs. Christian Hammer is a WBO eliminator so plenty of options there for Parker. In addition with the WBC stating that Povetkin can return to their ratings in January a resurrection of the Wilder vs. Povetkin fight is not impossible.

Whilst the WBC have resolved the situation of the positive test for Povetkin the subject of alleged positive tests is still stalking the heavyweights. Tyson Fury is adamant that he is going to return to the ring but it is not clear whether he will be able to do so without that situation being resolved and I am still not clear where the matter rests with regard to Luis Ortiz.

Fury is adamant that his test result was due to his unknowingly eating a food that caused the results. Ortiz is claiming it was due to some medication. Luis Nery has also quoted a food was at the root of his test results and the only punishment I can see doled out to Nery is for him to give Shinsuke Yamanaka a return which will result in another big payday for the Mexican. It is difficult to see that as a punishment. All of this undermines the fight against illegal substances. The food explanation has been

used before and since it seems to have been accepted in the Nery case will be used more. The WBA have rightly suspended Ortiz and removed him from his their rankings and said he cannot fight for their title until September 2018. To me that is not enough. The minimum suspension for a confirmed positive test should be two years and for a second positive test five years. You will never make any inroads to the use of banned substances unless the chance of being caught is high and the level of punishment is severe. The suspensions by sanctioning bodies are limited in that they don't administrate boxing in any country and suspension by them does not stop the fighter from boxing only from boxing for a sanctioning body title. A case in point is Erkan Teper who is banned from fighting for the EBU title but is able to box in Germany. It is pointless having a great testing process if you are going to accept these types of explanations. The solution is already out there and is simple. The athlete is 100% responsible for what goes into his system. That's it. Whatever the athlete drinks eats or sniffs it his responsibility to ensure it is not contaminated. Rant over.

There is a phrase being bandied about known as the "The Anthony Joshua Effect". That Anthony Joshua effect was clearly seen in some recent purses. Whereas Joshua took down somewhere around \$20 million and Carlos Takam around \$6 ½ million for their fight Wilder's purse for the Stiverne fight was around \$1 ½ million and Stiverne's around \$500,000. In fact when you look at the purses for the undercard in New York which were Shawn Porter \$500,000, Adrian Granados \$200,000, Dominic Breazeale \$250,000 Eric Molina \$90, 000, Sergey Lipinets \$90,000 and Akihiro Kondo\$15,000 Takam received more for fighting Joshua than all of the combined purses for the fighters on the New York show. Joshua gets \$20 million for fighting Takam and Wilder \$1.5 million for fighting Stiverne-no wonder Wilder wants to fight Joshua.

Even if the Wilder vs. Stiverne fight was a farce there is plenty to look forward to. In no particular order there is already a mention of 5 May next year for Gennady Golovkin vs. Saul Alvarez II, we have Vasyl Lomachenko vs. Guillermo Rigondeaux on 9 December we have Leo Santa Cruz and Abner Mares sorting out dates and purses for their return match next year, there is Srisaket vs. Juan Francisco Estrada and Carlos Cuadras vs. Brian Viloria on 24 February in Carson, Anthony Dirrell defending his interim IBF super middle title against Jose Uzcategui 27 January , we have two interesting middleweight fights with Daniel Jacobs taking on unbeaten Luis Arias this weekend and Billy Joe Saunders putting his WBO middle title on the line against Canadian puncher David Lemieux on 16 December, there's Sergey Kovalev vs. Vyacheslav Shabransky for the vacant WBO light heavy title on 25 November, possible a fight in the Ney Year between Mikey Garcia and Jorge Linares, Jerwin Ancajas going onto the lion's den in Belfast to defend his IBF super fly title against unbeaten Jamie Conlan on 18 November, on 16 December it is Karo Murat and Dominic Boesel fighting a return of their contest in July when Murat came from behind to stop Boesel in the eleventh round to snap Boesel 24 bout winning record and take the vacant European light heavy title and if that's not enough we have the

WBSS semi-finals at cruiser and super middle early next year. What a wonderful sport.

Adonis Stevenson has a defence pencilled in for 17 January in Quebec City. The talk is of a defence against Badou Jack. It looks a very interesting fight but it should not be happening. Jack vacated the secondary WBA light heavy title after beating Nathan Cleverly. Apparently as part of the contract he signed to get the Cleverly fight Jack had to agree to relinquish the title if he won. He did so on the understanding that Mayweather Promotions were lining up a big fight for him. So far so good and that fight with Stevenson will be a bigger fight than Cleverly. Why should it not happen? Well because it screws Eleider Alvarez. He is the WBC No 1 and in his last two fights, both for the WBC Silver title; he has beaten Lucien Bute and Jean Pascal. How long has he been waiting for his title shot—six months, a year, eighteen months? Well in fact he has been No 1 with the WBC since December 2015 so almost two years. Let's get out the canapés and champagne to celebrate the fourth anniversary of Stevenson last mandatory defence—yes it was in November 2013. It's about time Alvarez got what he is owed—a shot at the WBC title.

Some interesting fights under the Alex Povetkin vs. Christian Hammer scrap in Ekaterinburg on 15 December will see former IBF feather champion Evgeny Gradovich taking on unbeaten Australian-based Irish southpaw TJ Doheny at super bantam: Doheny is No 3 with the IBF and Gradovich is No 6 so with positions 1 and 2 vacant the winner would be qualify to go top and become the mandatory challenger to Ryosuke Iwasa. Also on the show unbeaten super welter Magomed Kurbanov, the WBA No 6 faces OPBF No 3 Akinori Watanabe.

The Manny Pacquiao vs. Jeff Horn fight seems to have brought Australia to the attention of Top Rank. They have Gilberto Ramirez putting his WBO super middle title on the line on 3 February with the name of Ghanaian Habib Ahmed in the frame as a possible challenger and there was a suggestion that on 12 May it could be Australian Rohan Murdoch against Ramirez. There are plenty of good young fighters down there such as the Moloney twins and Jai Opetaiia so there may be some long term benefits from Pacquiao vs. Horn particularly as it seems that if Horn gets past Gary Corcoran on 13 December then Top Rank's Terrence Crawford will be his next challenger. As for Ramirez somewhere in his schedule will have to be the return with Jesse Hart as the WBA put Hart at No 1 at their recent Convention.

It was good to see that Antonio Cervantes was honoured at that WBA Convention. The talented Colombian known as "Kid Pambele" had two spells as WBA light welterweight champion. He first won the title in 1972 by beating Alfonso Frazer in Panama and made ten defences losing the title to Wilfredo Benitez in 1976. He regained the title by beating Carlos Gimenez in 1977 and lost the title to Aaron Pryor in his seventh defence in 1980. When he retired in 1983 with a 91-12-3 record he had beaten some of the big names of that time such as Rodolfo Gonzalez, Nicolino Locche, Esteban De Jesus, Hector Thompson, Saoul Mamby and so many more. He was 18-3 in 21 title fights and only four of those fights were held in Colombia. A true ring great who was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1998.

Zolani Tete is another fighter getting some well deserved recognition. The former IBF super fly and current WBA interim bantam champion is on the list of candidates for the title Sports Star of the Year at the South African Sports Awards on 12 November. There is no guarantee that "Last Born" (a hint from his mum to his dad) will win but he is the first boxer to ever be on the list which is in itself an indication of the regard the talented little South African enjoys in his own country.

It is not just a South African boxer getting a sign of his emergent status. Trainer Colin Nathan's excellent work was acknowledged by the WBC's request that he conduct a five-day seminar for trainers in Shanghai. Recognition of the success hard work has brought for Nathan who has trained seven world champions and six South African champions and more to come.

A bit of self indulgence here. I campaigned long and fairly successfully to have the so called WBA "regular" title referred to as their "secondary" title. I see lots of people using that term now. My other beef was over the use of No Contest which to me was totally wrong since what actually transpired was a No Decision. I thought I was that voice crying in the wilderness (Ok a bit over dramatic there) but BoxRec showed the result for the Jamie McDonnell vs. Liborio Solis fight as a No Decision and for me BoxRec is the arbitrator for such things. I just hope it was not a slip of the index finger, C is just above D on the keyboard, and others will follow suit. Next beef-about this glove wrapping tape that even came adrift in the Joshua vs. Takam fight when is someone going to solve that problem. Ah yet again a voice crying in the wilderness! Every fight for Hong Kong's star fighter super fly Rex Tso has been a battle of attrition with Tso willing to take to give. That seems to have caught up with him as Tso has been advised by doctors to take a six month break although the likelihood is that he will sit things out for longer than that. He is No 2 with the WBO but a battle of attrition with "Monster" Naoya Inoue is the last thing he needs so the rest is probably a good idea.

The death of any boxer involved in boxing activity is a tragedy but particularly when they are only 20-years-old. Philippines boxer Jeffrey Claro fell into a coma and died after a sparring session. In Claro's case there are worrying elements. Claro was one of around 150 Filipino boxers who were banned in August after falsifying the results of brain scans. It seems that the boxers could not afford to have the tests done so they submitted false CT scan results. The Games and Amusements Board (GAB) who administer boxing in the Philippines are a well organised efficient outfit and they detected the false results and banned the boxers involved. Claro had genuine tests carried out and submitted the results and the GAB reviewed them and found them acceptable with no trace of any injury. After his death examination revealed that Claro had a fresh injury probably caused during the sparring session and an older injury almost certainly caused in another sparring session that occurred after he had submitted his new scans. It is a sorry state that the boxers put their lives at risk because they could not afford the cost of the scans and seemingly nor was there any financial help available to cover those costs. It's a fact that administrative bodies have a hard enough time monitoring fights and can't monitor all of what goes on in gyms Such a tragedy.

So you fancy promoting a show in a nice small town in Louisiana. A picnic. Three days to fight time all going well-and then. One fighter calls off because he sliced a cut on his hand. Another calls off because he got arrested, and another just did not arrive. On the day of the weigh in there is supposed to be a female fighter from Kazakhstan but she spent three days in airports and caught an infection so the doctor rules her out. With all of the above there is still one fighter without an opponent and if you can't find someone for him you will not meet the minimum rounds requirement for the show. All you have to do is to find someone immediately available who has all of his paper work for all of the HIV tests and Hepatitis B & C test. One is found in Arkansas and he saves the show by working until 11.00am on the day of the fight and then driving six hours straight to get to the weigh and somehow you have show. Easy peasy my friend Bad Chad-fancy doing another one next week?