

Showtime Championship Boxing Klitschko vs. Peter

By Jereme Warneck

Showtime Championship Boxing Recap Part 1 September 11, 2008 O2 World Arena-Berlin, Germany First, a correction to last week's recap. Delvin Rodriguez, who will be challenging for Paul Williams' 147-pound title on HBO on November 29, is not the mandatory contender to that title. (Thanks to Scott.) WBC Heavyweight (200+ pounds) 12-Round Championship Match: Samuel Peter (30-1, 23 KO's, 253 pounds) (c) vs. Dr. Vitali Klitschko (35-2, 34 KO's, 246 pounds) Peter won the full version of this championship in his last match from Oleg Maskaev via technical knockout at 2:56 of round 6. The match was the usual boring slow heavyweight affair. A full recap of that match can be found here: <http://www.number1contender.net/the-latest/2008/10/11/recap-of-samuel-peter-vs-oleg-maskae.html> Peter is making his first defense of this title. The native of Nigeria wants Vitali's younger brother and multiple heavyweight title belt holder Wladimir Klitschko. Peter has only one defeat on his record and it came at the hands of Wladimir via 12-round unanimous decision on September 24, 2005 at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The Nigerian was able to knock Wladimir down multiple times in the match, before running out of gas and letting the Ukrainian's pace overwhelm him. Vitali historically has had a better chin than Wladimir and an equal work rate. Peter weighed in for the match with Wladimir at 243 pounds and 253 pounds for tonight's match with Vitali. Peter's people have always defended the native Nigerian's weight as not a problem. However, in reality he is at least 30 pounds overweight and probably a lot more. This makes him very slow and quick to tire out. His punches are very hard, but they are easy to see coming at a distance. Peter's success in the division could be attributed more to the state of the heavyweight division than Peter's greatness. Peter is The Ring magazine's number 2 contender to their vacant championship at heavyweight. Klitschko had a strong amateur career under the Soviet boxing system. He used the fundamentals he learned there to capture the WBO Heavyweight Championship by defeating Herbie Hide via knockout at 1:14 of round 2 on June, 26, 1999 at the New London Arena in London, England, less than 4 years after turning pro. However, it is believed that the early training under the Soviet system that made Klitschko a successful boxer ultimately led to his downfall and several year absence from the sport. The Soviets began giving their athletes heavy doses of steroids and other performance enhancing drugs at an extremely young age. The belief is that now former Soviet athletes' bodies are breaking down extensively and abnormally early, because of all the steroids they took so early in life. Many of the athletes have not admitted to steroid use, but the training methods of the Soviets and East Germans are not a secret. Klitschko and others are believed to be warning signs of what happens when people begin abusing steroids at an early age. Klitschko has withdrawn from more than 5 matches in 4 years of inaction, 2 years of which featured him in full retirement citing a myriad of injuries. They have a torn ligament in his right knee and a series of back injuries, some of which can easily be linked to early steroid abuse. Klitschko's last match was a technical knockout victory at 1:26 of round 8 over Danny Williams on December 11, 2004 at the Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. That was Klitschko's first and only defense of the WBC Heavyweight Championship. However, the WBC, which is the most corrupt major sanctioning body in boxing, named Klitschko the "champion emeritus" when he said he was retiring and would be unable to defend the title. That meant he would be able to return at any time he chose and receive an immediate shot at the belt. (With that precedent, I will be returning in January to San Jose to reclaim the seventh grade intramural flag football championship. Get your popcorn ready Bernal.) ESPN.com reports that 4-times in the history of boxing, a former champion has returned off a 20+ month layoff to immediately challenge for the heavyweight title. All of them lost, 3 by brutal knockout. The two that would anyone reading this would have seen were Larry Holmes beating a diminished Muhammad Ali and Mike Tyson dominating Larry Holmes. Ali is the only boxer to come off this sort of layoff with any major success. He was out of the sport for 43 months for refusing to enter the army. However, if anyone has watched tapes of the pre and post suspension Ali there is a world of difference. Upon his return a lot of Ali's signature speed that made him great was gone. The reason Ali had so many memorable matches upon his return was because he had lost so much that he was no longer the dominant force he had been. Ali was then relatively equal to heavyweights he would have dominated earlier. Klitschko is unranked by any independent sanctioning body due to the fact he has not boxed since, "Drop It Like It's Hot" by Snoop Dogg featuring Pharell was the number 1 song in the United States. However, the time off has allowed Klitschko to launch an unsuccessful bid to be the mayor of Kiev, Ukraine, which should earn him a solid ranking among the top 10 most influential political leaders in Kiev city government. At 28-years-old, Peter is 9 years younger than the 37-year-old Klitschko. Klitschko has the height advantage standing 6' 7.5" tall, while Peter stands 6' 0.5" tall. The Ukrainian has the reach advantage with an 80" wingspan, compared to the 77" wingspan of Peter. Neither boxers' unofficial weight approaching match time is available. However, their weights are unlikely to have changed much since the weigh-ins and Peter's excess girth ensures he is the heavier boxer in the ring. Both boxers will employ the orthodox stance. Entering this week Klitschko was the 8-to-5 betting favorite, which says more about Peter and today's heavyweight division than Klitschko. The unified rules of boxing are in effect for this match. Open scoring is being used for this match. The official judges keeping score of this match from ringside are from England, Japan, and Thailand. The referee is Massimo Barrovecchio Klitschko completely dominates Peter in winning round 1, 10-9. If Peter does not change something quickly, he appears on the way to losing via early knockout. Peter looks slow. In round 2, Klitschko seems to land almost every punch on his way to winning the round, 10-9. Klitschko dominates Peter in winning round 3, 10-9. This match has become silly. In round 3, Klitschko literally dropped his hands all the way to his sides and did not even bring them up to try and block when Peter punched. However, with Klitschko making a mockery of basic defense Peter was unable to hit the tall Ukrainian. This match is an embarrassment to the sport of boxing, in that someone ranked this highly can be made to look like a fool by a guy who has not had an official match in nearly 4 years. Round 4 is Peter's best round of the night. However, Klitschko still wins round 4 decisively, 10-9. After 4 rounds, Klitschko is ahead on my scorecard, 40-36. The official judges have this match unanimously for Klitschko after round 4: 40-36, 40-36, 40-

36. In round 5, there is significant swelling around the left eye of Peter. Peter has also begun to bleed from the bottom lip in round 5. Klitschko wins round 5, 10-9. Round 6 is all Klitschko, 10-9. Klitschko wins round 7, 10-9. The Ukrainian takes round 8, 10-9. At this point Peter looks gassed and is having a lot of problem getting oxygen with his lip bleeding. A few more rounds of this type of punishment and no apparent hope of winning and his corner may need to think about stopping it. Klitschko leads on my scorecard after 8 rounds, 80-72. The official judges have Klitschko unanimously ahead after 8 rounds: 80-72, 80-72, 79-73. I have no idea how the one judge gave Peter a round, it does not appear Peter has come close to winning a round. Still at this point Peter will need a knockout to win. Unfortunately for the native Nigerian, Klitschko has never been knocked down as a pro. Klitschko has 2 knockout losses, one when he tore his rotator cuff. The "champion emeritus" is even more fragile now and does have a good chance of tearing something in the final few rounds. The other knockout loss of Klitschko's career came when he suffered such a severe cut around his left eye that the doctor was forced to stop the match or it appeared the Ukrainian eye was going to be knocked out during the match. However, Peter would have to hit Klitschko to cut him, and that has been the fundamental problem for the Nigerian the entire match. At the end of round 8, Peter had severe swelling around both eyes. He then heard the judges scores read and told his corner, "It's over." The corner then signaled to the referee to stop the match. Peter decided he had enough of Klitschko, wow. The former champion has just gone to a very dark place, and few boxers ever recover from that journey. Peter's people are stunned at the decision of their boxer. The final outcome from the legendary Michael Buffer is: at 3:00 of round the red corner has retired, making the winner and once again WBC Heavyweight Champion of the World, "Dr. Ironfist" Vitali Klitschko. Klitschko moves to 36-2, with 35 of those wins coming by way of knockout. Klitschko said in his post match interview that he felt the same as he did before the layoff. He said there is currently one major heavyweight belt not held by a Klitschko brother that they need to go get it. Vitali did not say if he or Wladimir would be going after the belt that is currently wrapped around Nikolai Valuev's waist. He also jokingly did not rule out the possibility of the brothers meeting to unify all of the belts. However, it will not happen. Peter's promoter gave a post match interview saying Peter's corner stopped the match. However, the live audio would disagree with that. He said that open scoring had nothing to do with the decision, but that Peter had just taken enough abuse. The promoter's spin was Peter had a bad night and he will be back. None of this, except for the fact open scoring had nothing to do with it sounds remotely true. Peter stopped the match himself, and the promoter is trying to save the marketability of his boxer. Neither Peter nor Peter's trainer would give interviews after the match. If it was a corner stoppage, the corner would come out and say why. Only if the boxer stopped it would everyone not answer questions so they did not have to explain what truly happened. Oddly, Peter never went to the hospital after the match, but straight back to his hotel. Boxers who lose via knockout when they are severely hurt are almost always sent to the hospital for neurological exams. Klitschko broke Peter mentally, not physically. First, Klitschko's victory in this match does not vindicate the WBC's decision to give him an immediate title shot upon his return to the ring. It exposed how poor the heavyweight division is. A brittle politician who has not had an official match in nearly 4 years should not make the number 2 ranked heavyweight in the world look like he has no business in the ring with him. It is unclear where Klitschko goes from here. He looked dominant in victory. Klitschko was actually boring, because he was too dominant in this match. He achieved his goal of holding a heavyweight belt at the same time as his brother, which does not mean a lot these days with 4 or 5 heavyweight belts available. Now, Vitali and Wladimir have eliminated all the other competition in the heavyweight ranks to the point the only opponent that makes sense for either of them is to face each other. Vitali winning via dominating knockout was the absolute worst possible outcome for the sport of boxing. There will be no unification matches in the near future, now. Vitali is probably going to go beat up guys that Wladimir has already beat up, which will further aid in killing the division dead for years. Peter lost his championship in the most decisive way possible. He is now in the same spot Rich Franklin is at in the 185-pound division in UFC. Peter clearly will want no more part of the Klitschko brothers or any other tall heavyweights. At this point it is hard to think of a remotely attractive match for him. This the type of performance that will probably land Peter back on ShoBox facing the likes of Sultan Ibragimov and Chris Arreola. After this, it is unlikely that Peter will even want to box anytime until summer 2009. This match was probably a worse mental beating for Peter than physical. He should be physically recovered from this match and ready to begin training in a few weeks. However, this is the type of loss a lot of boxers do not rebound from, ever. Klitschko mentally broke Peter and nothing can ever repair that. A long layoff will not help cure being mentally broken in a match to the point it leads a boxer to quit on their stool. Peter now knows he has it in him to quit and be broken. Once a boxer goes to that place it is easier for them to go there, again. It is unlikely he will ever return to the form he showed before this match following this loss. The announcers on Showtime do not believe there was a single positive thing Peter can take away from this match. He needs to lose a lot of weight, get in better condition, and simply improve every facet of his boxing to be competitive with the Klitschko brothers let alone have a chance to beat them. This match was one-sided, boring and bad for the sport of boxing. It may be relevant, but is generally depressing to watch knowing its full context. News and Notes: New Jersey has found a replacement for the deposed athletic commissioner Larry Hazzard, Aaron Davis. Davis had been the athletic commissioner in Kansas before taking this job. Kendall Holt and Ricardo Torres have reached an agreement to face each other in a rubber match with Holt's 140-pound belt on the line. The match will be held in Boardwalk Hall on December 13. It will be on Showtime. Zab Judah, who said he was too injured to headline a pay-per-view against Antonio Maragarito on November 1, will return to official boxing competition on November 8. Judah will probably face Ernest Johnson on the undercard of the Joe Calzaghe-Roy Jones, Jr, PPV at Madison Square Garden in New York City, New York in a catch-weight match to be contested at 144 pounds. The Brooklyn, New York resident has finally decided he would be best off continuing his boxing career at 140 pounds, and this match would be a good transition. After the victory, expect Judah to call out Ricky Hatton. In an addendum to my previous popular rant about parents giving children names that will cause them problems the rest of their lives. Parents need to not give kids 2 last names, especially boys. I went to an all boys high school. Had a young man shown up with 2 last names even the teachers

would have put a bulls-eye on that young man from the moment he stepped on campus. At a school like that almost everyone went by their last name. My 32 person PE class Sophomore year had 5 Dave's in it, hence no one got called Dave. It was to the point where some people did not even know some of their friends' real first names. Babies are not dolls come to life, that exist for amusement. They are actually people that will exist for over 70 years, do not wreck their lives unnecessarily. The next recap will be out tomorrow covering part 2 of this event featuring Antonio Tarver vs. Chad Dawson. Sincerely, Jereme Warneck number1contender.net Boxing and Video Game Correspondent for f4wonline.com Hidden Valley Lake, CA I can be reached for feedback and comments at ZurRoadie@aol.com or as JeremeW on XBOX Live. I read everything.