

Preview: Klitschko - Ibragimov

Written by {ga=fightdr}

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An actually legitimate heavyweight title fight? Huh? Tonight? For free on HBO? That's right. For the first time in what seems like eons, two actual talented heavyweight fighters will enter the ring at Madison Square Garden and unify the belts in boxings most popular division as Wladimir Klitschko and Sultan Ibragimov throw down tonight for the IBF, WBO, and IBO titles. And before the fight, HBO will show the replay of last weekends thrilling win by Kelly Pavlik over Jermain Taylor. The Fight Doctor previews tonights tilt.



Boxing fans have been waiting years for the heavyweight division to be viable again. Not since Lennox Lewis retired back in 2003 have we had a true champion in the most talked about and watched division in the sport. People love to see large guys beat each other up and hope for brutal knockouts, which heavyweight fights often yield.

Tonight, live from Madison Square Garden in the heart of New York city, we have the first legitimate heavyweight title fight in quite some time. Wladimir Klitschko (49-3, 44 KO) will step into the squared circle with Sultan Ibragimov (22-1, 17 KO) for a twelve round unification title fight. The IBF, WBO, and IBO titles are all at stake.

A few years ago if you told me Wladimir Klitschko would be possibly going for the unified title, I would have called you crazy. "Dr. Steelhammer" looked to have a glass jaw when he lost two out of four fights back in 2003 and 2004. He was knocked out by Corrie Sanders and Lamon Brewster, not exactly household names.

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Enter legendary trainer Emanuel Steward and now we have a completely different fighter. Klitschko has won seven fights in a row, all in dominating fashion. He has disposed of some big name fighters like Chris Byrd, Samuel Peter, Calvin Brock, and avenged the loss with Brewster.

Wladimir is now a world class boxer. His jab might be the nastiest punch in the sport. With his reach, it is nearly impossible to stop. He hasn't been hurt in any of the last seven fights, and not even rocked. Winning and confidence has been a great weapon for Wladimir, whose mental toughness was constantly called into question before he united with Steward.

The tough task of defeating the best heavyweight in the world is the task of Sultan Ibragimov tonight. He comes in with a lot less experience and a lot less size. He has been a very aggressive fighter and will need to be again tonight if he is going to pull off the upset. The list of fighters he has defeated is far from superior. The big names he has defeated include a very old and washed up Evander Holyfield and a guy who has always been an enigma in Shannon Briggs. There is no doubt he is in for the fight of his life this evening at The Garden.

The key to tonight's fight just might be the size. Klitschko is huge at 6 foot 6 and 238 pounds. Ibragimov comes in at 6 foot 2 and 219 pounds. If Ibragimov can use good movement and avoid those jabs from a distance, he might be able to hand around. Klitschko hits like a sledgehammer and Ibragimov's chin will be put to the test.

Even though Klitschko is the much bigger man, he is also very quick. He is light on his feet and has the complete package of skills. Ibragimov is still somewhat of a mystery to me. He looks to be a good counter puncher and have some solid power. He'll need to land some hard shots early on if he's going to last.

Wladimir Klitschko has been awesome in his title run and in his last seven wins. I fully expect another dominating performance tonight. If he uses his jab effectively,

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it could be another easy win for Big Wlad. On the other hand, the heavyweight division has been so strange and unpredictable over the last five years, who knows what might happen. If Ibragimov comes in and pulls the upset, I wouldn't be that surprised because of some of the talk surrounding him.

All in all, I expect a good exciting fight. Two solid, legitimate heavyweights going toe to toe. The world of boxing needs the big fellas to bring some excitement back and it all starts tonight.