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New England Chatta

By J.D. Vena

You have to love the match-up of styles. One fighter comes straight ahead and throws heavy punch upon heavy punch until his opponent wilts from excessive punishment. The other fighter comes straight ahead and throws heavy punch after heavy punch until his opponent wilts from excessive punishment. You read correctly. I lost my marbles a long time ago but that's what's in store for fans if they attend next Saturday's cruiserweight unification match between WBA champ **Jean-Marc Mormeck** of Noisy-le-Grand, France and WBC counterpart **Wayne "Big Truck" Braithwaite** at the DCU Center in downtown Worcester, MA or catch it on Showtime at 11:00 P.M. (EST).

According to Mormeck (30-2, 21 KOs) there will be a major difference when this duel of sledgehammers takes place.

"They call him 'Big Truck,'" Mormeck explained through an interpreter today on a national conference call. "Well I am like a train and when a train clashes head on with a truck, I think you know what will happen."

It hasn't been a heavy topic in boxing these days, what with the "The Contender" being sort of the buzz among the public and the outstanding battle between Erik Morales and Manny Pacquiao last Saturday night, but Braithwaite-Mormeck or however **Don King's** billing this one could potentially be just as exciting with only heavier blows.

Both Mormeck and Braithwaite (21-0, 17 KOs) have been relentless in establishing themselves as the worlds' baddest 200-pounders. The problem with this division is that as soon as there's a big fight, the winner always jumps to heavyweight. Former cruiserweight king, **Evander Holyfield** obviously achieved considerable accomplishments by even heavyweight standards but after him, fighters such as **Al Cole**, **Juan Carlos Gomez** and **Vassily Jirov** were quickly brought down to size when they left the cruiserweight division. Which is why in order for this division to make a name for itself, the winner's got to stay.

"I think the cruiserweight division is in need of a star," said Braithwaite. "I'm not looking into my future. I've wanted this fight for a long time. It was postponed last October and now I just hope that Jean-Marc and I can just stay healthy so that the world can find out, who is the best. On April 2nd, I will prove to be that star.

Whether a star is born that night or not, you can rest assured that there will be some serious fireworks.

The bonus of attending the Braithwaite-Mormeck clash at the DCU Center, is that it is one of many world class boxing matches that night and will include among others, WBA welterweight champ, **Jose Rivera's** first title defense against once beaten replacement,

Luis Collazo (24-1, 11 KOs) of New York. Collazo is a fill-in for Thomas Damgaard of Denmark who pulled out last week with pneumonia. Former world champs, **Keith Holmes** and **Lou Del Valle** will also be featured in separate bouts. For ticket information, phone Ticketmaster at 617-931-2000.

You may have already heard but Paramount Pictures has purchased the rights to the life stories of “**Irish**” **Micky Ward** and his older brother **Dick Eklund**. Most casual fans are familiar with Ward’s riveting trilogy of wars with Arturo Gatti, among many of his classic bouts, but the untold story lies with the resurrection of his brother Dickie.

After conquering the demons of crack cocaine, which was even featured in a gripping HBO documentary *Out on Crack Street*, and upon his release from prison, Dickie cleaned up his life to help his brother grasp fame and lucrative paydays.

What some don’t know is that Eklund appeared on HBO in boxing trunks in 1978 when he opposed ring legend **Sugar Ray Leonard** at the Hynes Convention Center. Eklund made a good account of himself that night extending Leonard for 10 hard-fought rounds. Incidentally, it was Leonard’s first appearance on the network as well. Eklund was a very good boxer with plenty of potential, but aptitude came to fruition when he helped summon Ward’s incredible fighting spirit. The two succeeded together. “*The Fighter* is the working title of the Eklund/Ward movie,” according to Eklund’s attorney, Nicholas Guerrero. “The writers tell me that Dickie’s character will be the central character. The producers tell me that Paramount wants to move quickly to production to tap into the current interest in boxing stories generated by *Million Dollar Baby* and *The Contender*.”

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