

Pirog retains WBO belt

UNDEFEATED WBO middleweight champion, Dmitry Pirog is chasing a unification clash with Daniel Geale for early 2012.

"If I don't fight [Sergio] Martinez I'm looking for a unification with Daniel Geale right now on HBO," said Pirog (19-0, 15 KOs).

Pirog scored a 10th round TKO over WBO No.1 contender Gennady Martirosyan (22-2, 11 KOs) on September 25 in Krasnodar, Russia.

The 6ft 1in Pirog gave Martirosyan a steady diet of leather throughout the fight while the 5ft 7in challenger had difficulty getting into punching range.

WORLD With RAY WHEATLEY of BOXING



SUPERFIGHT: Sergio Martinez stops Darren Barker and could soon face IBF king Daniel Geale (with promoter Gary Shaw)

Dogged Barker inspires Geale

By RAY WHEATLEY

IBF champion middleweight champion Daniel Geale has the ability to defeat Sergio Martinez according to his manager Bill Treacy, who was less than impressed with the Argentinean's victory over England's Darren Barker on October 1.

"We've studied several of Sergio Martinez fights and are confident that Daniel has the skills to defeat him," Treacy said.

"After watching Darren Barker give Martinez a tough fight we are now more convinced than before Daniel would win."

Martinez is rated No.4 for the IBF crown but on his ring achievements deserves to be recognised as the best 160 pounder in the world.

"I am sure the boxing world will want to see Daniel Geale and Sergio Martinez clash in 2012," Treacy said. "It would determine who is the best middleweight in the world."

Geale captured the IBF middleweight crown in Germany by outscoring Sebastian Sylvester and defended it successfully with a clear decision over Nigerian born-Miami based Eromosele Albert.

Geale's promoter Gary Shaw says he would like Daniel to have one more fight in Australia before chasing a big fight in the USA on HBO or SHOWTIME.

"By then he will be ready to fight Martinez."

Geale said the Martinez-Barker fight

was "entertaining" and that Barker frustrated Martinez "a fair bit".

"Martinez showed a few weaknesses," Geale said, "hopefully down the track I'd love to fight him. Barker faded a bit at the end and Martinez got the job done."

"He is very evasive he does have flaws. We know he's always going to be very fit and throw a lot of punches."

Geale said while winning his world title in Germany had been tough his ultimate goal was to beat the world's top fighters in America.

He was very grateful to the "great crowd" who cheered his first defence in Hobart in August.

Martinez, 36, retained the WBC Diamond middleweight title, stopping the previously unbeaten Barker in the 11th round in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Martinez (48-2-2, 27 KOs) landed a vicious three-punch combination finished with a right behind the ear to put Barker (23-1, 14 KOs) on the canvas.

The European champion, 29, failed to beat referee Eddie Cotton's 10-count and his world title dream was over with 91 seconds of the round remaining.

A devastated Barker said: "I can't remember the punch, my legs just fell out from under me."

"I was trying to get up but couldn't. I'm so disappointed as there was only a round and a half left to go."

Barker went into the having claimed the British, Commonwealth and European titles along the way and outpoint-

ing tough Aussie Ben Crampton during his rise to the top.

He was the clear underdog in most people's eyes and was in real trouble in the 10th against the man listed as No.3 in the world pound-for-pound rankings.

Early on, Barker looked like he might bag the upset of the year before an excited crowd of 4,376 in a Boardwalk Hall set up for 5,000. He landed some solid right hands and held his hands nice and high, making it hard for Martinez to penetrate his guard.

And then he landed a shot on Martinez's nose and the blood began to flow. Several times, Martinez blew and blood sprayed out.

But from the fifth round on, Martinez, fighting much of the fight with his hands by his side to entice Barker to attack, dominated the fight behind three- and four-punch flurries that left Barker covering up for most of the bout.

Through 10 rounds, judges Lynn Carter (96-94), Victor Loughlin (97-94) and Alejandro Roche (99-91) all had Martinez ahead.

Martinez, who lives in Oxnard, California, is widely considered one of the top three pound-for-pound fighters in boxing along with welterweights Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr. He has been campaigning for a fight against Pacquiao or Mayweather at a catch-weight of around 150 pounds, but neither fighter appears willing to move up that far in weight.



TITLE HOPE: Sam Soliman hammers Pradeep Singh
- Picture: WERNER KALIN

Soliman in title chase

By RAY WHEATLEY

IBF No. 6 middleweight Sam Soliman (39-11, 17 KOs) will clash with IBF No.14 Eromosele Albert (24-5-1, 12 KOs) over 12 rounds in an IBF box-off to find the mandatory challenger for IBF middleweight champion Daniel Geale.

The management of Albert and the manager of Soliman have reached an agreement to clash at The Melbourne Pavilion, Flemington on November 18.

Soliman's manager David Stanley said: "We are very happy to have the fight in Melbourne but we also know Sam will be in for one of the toughest fights of his career."

"Albert proved he is one of the best middleweights in the world recently when he challenged Daniel Geale in Hobart and pressured the champion in all of the 12 rounds."

Soliman is very happy that Albert has taken the fight and he said: "I want to thank my manager David Stanley who has done a great job in finally securing Eromosele Albert to meet me in the IBF box-off on November 18 but I also realise it will be one of the hardest and most important fights of my career."

Barker gutted as Lee steps up: Page 14

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