

Road To Glory

The figure that is known worldwide as King Arthur is based on legends and folklore. Although he lost his first battle within the war, King Arthur Abraham is the real deal – just ask anyone in boxing. The next saga in beginning a triumphant reign: To hold his throne and win the Super Six World Boxing Classic.

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Dressed in a black velvet Roberto Cavalli suit and Italian leather loafers, Arthur Abraham takes the back seat of a Lincoln Town Car as he sits through a two-hour trek from the deserts of Palm Springs to the heart of Los Angeles where every other Armenian in the city presumably resides – Glendale.

His stay marks the first time he's ever been to L.A., and even though he'll be starring in the feature film *Max Schmeling* this year, he didn't come half way around the globe for Tinseltown's glitz and glamour. It's strictly business – in his case boxing – a phrase that is the embodiment of one of the sport's most vicious knockout artist.

His fists speak louder than his soft-spoken words or any dramatic line delivered in a movie and although reclined comfortably in the back, he is still in complete control of the stereo system. He's listening to his favorite musicians: Armen Aloyan, Tata Simonyan and Armenchik, going as far as cranking up the volume during all of his favorite tunes while murmuring the chorus and faintly snapping his fingers, then putting the song on repeat and beginning the process all over again.

Armenian and classical music, plays, and chess are his favorite pastimes. Drinking, smoking or even enjoying the everyday pleasures of coffee are things he doesn't even come close to touching. He lives up life in various other forms. One being his bright orange Ferrari that sees uncharted speeds every now and then. Driving through the torrential rains, Abraham admits he's tired of living countless months of the robotic lifestyle out on the road and away from the comforts of his home in Germany, exhausted of simply eating, sleeping and training and going as far as saying, "there are days I don't like boxing." He doesn't work a nine-to-five nor can he just hop in his Ferrari and drive off into another world, but propose a different lifestyle and scenario, and he's ready to go down on one knee. Having just turned 30 years of age in February and still an eligible bachelor, he wants to settle down and start the journey that awaits almost everyone in the latter stages of life – marriage. "I spend time trying to solve that problem when-

ever I can," he shyly laughs off as he works on a full-portion of filet mignon, shrimp and every vegetable fixing imaginable. "When I find the right girl, the marriage process will be rather quick. My dream is to have three boys and a girl." Outside of the ring, Abraham is nothing like the human-bulldozing knockout machine that wreaks havoc inside of it. The words articulate, cultured, business-minded, sophisticated and cosmopolitan are not synonymous with a world-class boxing champion. He's far-off the image of boxing's prototypical stereotypes that are made up of the Floyd Mayweathers and Mike Tysons of the world. Though between the ropes, his love and affection for boxing is credited to one of the most volatile fighters the sport has ever seen.

"When I was growing up in Armenia, I would always watch Tyson's fights and get very excited from it. He's the No. 1 reason why I got into boxing," he says. Arthur's fondness of Iron Mike is further shown through his dog, aptly named "Mike Tyson." His aspirations also mirror those of the former heavyweight, sans the mind-boggling headlines, embarrassment and defeats, something he got a taste of in his last fight.



I want to be remembered as an undisputed champion of the world that will be globally recognized and respected as an elite boxer. Winning the Super Six will further prove that.

THE MOTOWN BLUES

In March, Abraham suffered his first professional loss via a controversial disqualification to the hands of Andre Dirrell, albeit amidst a cluster of hullabaloo that started months back with Dirrell faking an injury that forced a home-court swing from Los Angeles to Detroit, Abraham says. His voyage to Dirrell took him from Berlin to L.A, back to an unexpected trip to Deutschland and then to Detroit. In the process, his entire training regimen severely altered and his body taking close to five days of getting used to the time change and jet lag, he admits. Inside the ring on the ill-fated night of March 27, Abraham was frustrated with numerous bombs south of the border and was the victim of a head-butt that created a deep gash in his right eye; he even knocked Dirrell down without receiving credit. His opponent's blistering punches, mobility and aggression unraveled Abraham, even knocking him down for the first time ever in his career. With his power being superseded by speed, Arthur was hit with adversity. But the plot was still thickening, as in typical Abraham fashion, he built momentum in the latter rounds of the fight in hopes of working his knockout magic. ►

Behind on the judge’s scorecards and swinging for a KO in the 11th round, he did so illegally, landing a vicious right as Dirrell had slipped to his knees. In a delayed motion, down went Dirrell, failing to make an attempt to get back up. The post-scriptum from boxing media types and ringside scribes said that as Abraham was back in control of the fight, Dirrell seized the chance at weaseling his way out, much like the carbon copy of his backdoor exit from fighting in Los Angeles. DQ, game over, exit stage right. Abraham says Dirrell’s theatrics were worthy of an Oscar-winning performance. “He’s an actor, he’s not a fighter,” he said in a post-fight interview. Perhaps Dirrell was scouting a tape of Arthur the actor in addition to him as a boxer? Nobody knows for certain, but Abraham is confident he’ll hurdle the hiccup – quickly. As he puts it, there are only a handful of years left for his boxing legacy to take shape, saying he’ll hang up his gloves and call it a career in his mid-30s. “My mom’s wish is that I retire after the Super Six. But I told her no, I still have major plans and accomplishments left on the boxing horizon,” says Abraham, whose mother has not seen any of his bouts in person. “I’ve been through many trying instances in my life, whether it was maintaining by living on my own at such a young age or jumpstarting my career, but I can’t complain. I can honestly say I have persevered.”



I thought I could still punch. In the heat of the moment, I was watching only his head, not his feet. As a professional boxer, you always try and make pressure. That’s how I fight.



Dossier

Born Avetik Abrahamyan on February 20, 1980 in Yerevan. He lived in Nerkin Charbak and also went to the 99th school there until the age of 15. From 12-16 years of age, he was a cyclist. After he graduated, Abrahamyan moved to Germany and began his career as an amateur boxer, fighting over 90 times and winning countless titles and honors. In 1999, he moved back to Yerevan as he had to enlist for his two-year stint for the Armenian Military. Afterwards, he went to Armenia’s National University, graduating with a degree in international studies. After receiving a contract to fight professionally in Germany, his name change to Arthur Abraham came about to compliment and appeal an international audience, he says, claiming it was no different from what a Pelè or a Ronaldo did. He is currently 31-1 with 25 wins by knockout. He lives in Berlin with his mom, dad and brother Alexander, also a professional boxer. Arthur is currently competing in the Super Six World Boxing Classic. Later this summer, he will fight England’s Carl Froch (26-1), the former WBC super-middleweight champion.

ARMENIA’S SON, GERMANY’S SUPERSTAR, AMERICA’S NEXT BEST THING?

King Arthur has taken the throne and represented Armenians in the realm of sports across the globe. He’s done no different in Germany as he’s been named the countries No. 1 boxer the past four years. In a country where the athletic landscape is dominated by soccer, tennis and motor sports, he also has been voted in the top five for Germany’s Sports Personality of the Year Award – an honor won by the likes of tennis greats Steffi Graf and Boris Becker. Popularity has never been an issue for one of Europe’s most elite prize-fighters. For the past several years, Abraham has consistently sold out 15,000 seat arenas and finished off bouts to much approval, but it was his 2006 bout with Colombian Edison Miranda that further added to the legend of King Arthur. In one of the gutsiest performances in boxing memory, Abraham fought the last eight rounds against Miranda with a jaw that was shattered in two places. With his mouth dropped to the canvas and blood gushing from within, he would go on to win the fight in a 12-round decision. With the fight came worldwide respect – along with two titanium plates and 22 screws implanted into his mouth. Inside boxing circles, he is known for having a chin that is made somewhere in between a blend of iron and concrete. His first ever knockdown was an aberration as he was leaned back and backpedaling when he was met with Dirrell’s fist.



For the King, he now has his mind set on leaving his reign in the European cocoon and conquering the hearts of the American public. Although his stateside campaign got off on the wrong foot, Showtime’s Super Six World Boxing Classic will prove to be the most defining stretch of his career in which he aims to achieve global recognition. Of his 32 professional fights, 29 have been held in Germany. “The most important thing for me is to be respected as a world-class fighter across the map. The ring remains the same ring with its dimensions, no matter the location of it. It doesn’t change my ambitions inside of it. I don’t underestimate my opponents. I train thinking I am the weaker one. But after I win this tournament, the world will know Arthur Abraham.” After hours of extensive dialogue, the statement sprung forth as the brashest thing he said, as if verbally daggering his sword through the soil. Arthur is a humbled individual whose modesty and maturity are the foremost qualities you would first notice. Because of his verbal limitations in English, his speech delivery comes across unrefined – even crass; but he says he’s working on the acclimation process to the American culture, going as far as even peppering a couple of “Okay Homie” and “Thanks Dawg” along the way. His disposition in any of the other three languages he speaks – Armenian, Russian or German – are that of an intellectual.

His discipline can be credited to his two years of service for the Armenian Military. His articulation can be credited to earning a degree in international studies from Armenia’s National University. He lives and breathes for his family, who reside with him in his Berlin home. He gifted his mother her personal beauty salon. Every time he goes back home to Armenia, he has a special gift for his grandmother – flowers, one for each of his fights. He also gave the country the gift of a church in November 2009 in memory of his deceased uncle as well as the entire Abrahamyan family and the Armenian folk. Business? He does that too. Next time you are in Europe, hop on “King Airlines” for your next flight across the continent. But he also realizes that he is a son on a much broader scale: The Son of Armenia. “I am honored to be one of the prominent individuals representing our country to the rest of the world,” he says. “Eventually fighting in my homeland of Armenia is one of my biggest goals and desires before my professional boxing career comes to a close. Until then, through my fights, I will always strive to make Armenians remain happy and in high spirits. I hope that through boxing and the news I make in it, I always keep the Armenian name prominent and respectable.” With no further intentions to disappoint, he’s ready for his second chance. ©