SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF VIC DARCHINYAN, PART THREE

The Home Depot Center at Carson, unlikely home of David Beckham's LA Galaxy, November 1, 2008. IBF champ Darchinyan swarms all over Mexican Cristian Mijares, bouncing leather off his head and drilling holes straight through his defence.

Mijares is the smiling new poster boy of boxing, a brilliant, gutsy warrior, WBA and WBA super flyweight champion and overwhelming favourite. The first round nears the bell and Darchinyan's punches zero in from odd angles. As Mijares bends slightly to cover up, his opponent lines up the power and pulls the trigger. A perfect left hook whistles between Mijares' gloves and detonates on his chin.

Mijares lands on his back and lies there for several seconds, staring straight up, breathing heavily. Then he wearily rocks forward and climbs to his feet in slow stages. Darchinyan hurtles in again, firing punches. The bell goes but now it's a question of when, not if. In the ninth, Darchinyan connects with a big right and a swinging left that hurls Mijares to the floor again, where he stays. Vic Darchinyan is the undisputed champion of the world.

Back in sunny west Sydney a few weeks later, Darchinyan is telling me about the fight, before which most American experts had written him off. He clenches that lethal left.

"I wanted to go back to tactics, put my combinations together. I knew Mijares was a good fighter but I warned him. In an interview before the fight, I say, 'Mijares, you should be ready because I'm going to give you a hell of a fight. I'm going to destroy you. I'm gonna knock you out...'"

Lewis says Darchinyan is one of the top three pound-for-pound boxers on the planet, in the mix during any era. That if he was a heavyweight, the world would be "going mad" for him.

He himself almost thinks he is one anyway. He regularly spars with fighters 20 to 30kg heavier than him. His old gym had a body protector that carried the message: "Everyone sparring Vic must wear protection."

"I feel big with power," he says.

"If I fight 20 people like 100 kilos or more I think I can knock out them all. I feel too powerful for my weight division."

No surprise that Darchinyan's inspiration is Mike Tyson, a small, savage heavyweight with a brutal punch. He is, essentially, a man made for super fights, where what's left of boxing's big money pools. He outlines his plans to climb up through the weights, mentioning champions two and three divisions above him, including Filipino Pacquiao, currently the world's best.

"I would like to put my power against his power. It's also big money. My money is already big, getting bigger and bigger every fight. But if I think about money, I can't concentrate on the fight."

Jorge Arce (51-4-1, 39 KOs) is the most immediate test. On February 7, in a highly anticipated bout more than a year in the making, Darchinyan defends his unified junior bantamweight titles against the Mexican at the Honda Center in Anaheim.

"I'm focused on being the best. I want to fight the best, I want to knock out the best and my name is going to go down in history. That is my goal. We only have one life, that's why," he says.

Watch out for the little guy. The scenes he's in are going to get bigger and you'll have to pay to watch them. But it'll be worth it.

VIC DARCHINYAN

AGE 33
NICKNAME The Raging Bull
BORN Vanadzor, Armenia
HEIGHT 166cm
WEIGHT 52kg
TURNED PRO Nov 2000
CLASS Super Flyweight
RECORD 33 fights, 31 wins (25 by KO), 1 draw, 1 loss
STATUS Undisputed world super flyweight champion

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