



Andre Ward vs. Sergey Kovalev 2: "The Rematch" Oakland Press Conference Video, Photos and Quotes



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Oakland, CA (April 11, 2017) - On Tuesday at the Oakland Marriott in Oakland, CA, Unified Light Heavyweight World Champion Andre "SOG" Ward (31-0, 15 KOs) and former Unified Light Heavyweight World Champion Sergey "Krusher" Kovalev (30-1-1, 26 KOs) formally addressed the media regarding their highly-anticipated rematch on Saturday, June 17 at the Mandalay Bay Events Center in Las Vegas. The championship event, presented by Corona Extra, will be produced and distributed live by HBO Pay-Per-View® beginning at 9:00 p.m. ET/6:00 p.m. PT.

Tickets for Ward-Kovalev 2: "The Rematch" go on sale to the public on Friday, April 14 at 1:00 p.m. ET/10:00 a.m. PT. Tickets priced at \$1,255, \$755, \$505, \$355, \$255 and \$105 not including applicable service charges will be available on axs.com and at the Mandalay Bay Events Center box office.

Below is what the fighters and dais guests had to say at the press conference:

Andre "S.O.G." Ward - Unified Light Heavyweight World Champion

"I appreciate everybody for coming out today. It's always good to be home in the Bay Area. It's amazing how in a short time, eight, nine, ten years, we put the Bay on the map in terms of the boxing world. Oakland used to be a major fight town, and we got away from it. But through myself and many other young fighters, contenders who may not have had opportunities that I was afforded, we're doing our part to continue to represent the Bay in a major way and that's a beautiful thing.

"I'm excited about this rematch. These are the things I dreamed about as a kid. I love it. I love the back and forth, some people being with me and some people not being with me. I don't mind the stuff they talk about on social media. That's perception. I try and deal in the reality.

"At the end of the day, you've got to see me on June 17, we've got to fight. I don't care what you say, I don't care what the team says. That's going to make headlines. That's all good and part of the business. I understand the business very well and I'm good with that. But if you guys know me - the boxing world knows me, the Bay Area knows me - I don't have to do a lot of talking. To my young guys coming up, you don't have to talk a lot. Just show up when you're supposed to show up. Lock in and do what you got to do to prepare, and when it's time in that biggest moment when the lights come on, find a way to get it done.

"Boxing right now is not like it used to be. It's a climate right now where there's a lot of talking. Guys don't do what they say they're going to do. They don't perform and then they find excuses on why they didn't perform. There's only a handful of guys in history that I know that talked and then backed it up. We don't have a lot of that today. So, it's okay to not be the loudest talker in the room, but when it's time to shine, be that guy. Be the hardest worker. And another thing, I want to encourage every fighter in this room - you don't let anybody beat you before you get in the ring. I don't care what you say, where you're from, what your reputation is, it's a healthy respect you have for an opponent to prepare physically and mentally, you got to have that. But you don't let anybody - media, broadcasters, fighters, anybody - beat you before you get in the ring. You make them earn it. And if they do it, tip your hat to them and give it credit. But you're not beating me on reputations. This is the first time this team has met a team where that stuff isn't working. You beat me, you're going to earn it.

"I hope he's the best he can be. I hope he makes the adjustments he's supposed to make. We're going to get ready. We're not taking it for granted. That's what big rematches and big

fighters are all about. I want the best Sergey. I want his team to be focused. I want him to be focused and I know my team is going to be focused. Let's see what happens. The question I have for him and his team is, with all that loud talking, who are y'all trying to convince? Me or him?"

Sergey "Krusher" Kovalev - Former Unified Light Heavyweight World Champion

"The other side is saying I have to prove a lot, I have to show a lot. I don't need to prove or show anything. I showed and proved everything on November 19. Anybody who hasn't seen that or doesn't think that, you're going to see it on June 17. This is what I promise and this is what I'm going to do. The ones who think about Andre Ward's victory, you can still pray for him because I'm going to show it on June 17. He got those belts somehow. I think June 17 is going to be the day everybody's going to see the way it's supposed to be."

Michael Yormark - Roc Nation President & Chief of Branding and Strategy

"Hello Oakland! We are so happy to be here today. Today is a truly special day for this community, for this city. Oakland is synonymous with hard work, toughness, loyalty and pride. Today the native son returns. A man who represents all of those characteristics will stand before you, and unlike many in the professional sports world, Andre Ward is here to fight for Oakland! The best boxer in the world, the face of his sport, the hero and icon of this historic town - he fights for you. He did so last November, when he staged an epic comeback against dangerous Sergey Kovalev, and emerged victorious. After Andre's win, there was a lot of talk, a lot of debate, a lot of speculation, a lot of excuses. But Oakland doesn't make excuses, Oakland doesn't talk, Oakland acts.

"In one of his latest posts, Sergey said Andre 'slaps like woman'. Grammatical issues aside, on behalf of all the strong Oakland women in the audience today I'd like to say 'thank you Sergey for the compliment'. As someone who has spent the better part of the past three decades promoting sports and entertainment events, I'll give Sergey a lot of credit - he had some great soundbites in New York yesterday. He said 'Andre wears a crown'. Actually Sergey, they are belts, you should know, I think a couple of them used to be yours. He said he dislikes Andre - which brings the number of people here in Oakland today that dislike Andre up to a total of two: you and Kathy. But in all seriousness, the stakes could not be higher for this rematch and when Sergey says Andre 'will not show up for this fight,' that tells me he hasn't done his research. Andre has built his career on shining brightest in the biggest moments. June 17 is the biggest of moments - more than just wins and championship belts, this fight will ultimately dictate the fate of each fighter's legacy.

"This is the type of fight that is decided by pride, guts, toughness, overcoming adversity, and who just wants it more. For Andre Ward, being raised by the city of Oakland is his ultimate advantage. He was born with incredible talent and ability, but Oakland gave him his toughness, his pride and his uncanny ability to stare down any challenge, and dominate it. June 17 will be no different - at the end of the night there will be only one champion, and there will be no excuses."

Kathy Duva - CEO of Main Events

"If Andre Ward is half as tough in the ring as his promoter talks, I suppose Sergey may have his hands full. But we are coming to Las Vegas in June and Sergey has one goal in mind and that is to make sure that the winner actually wins the fight this time.

"Sergey Kovalev is probably the biggest perfectionist I've ever met. I've seen him walk away from fights that he knocked his opponent out in two rounds, and then apologize for his performance. Everybody keeps talking about excuses on the other side, and nobody's making any. He is blaming himself, he has apologized to his fans for not making that win emphatic enough so that people could not take it from him because, with all the respect in the world to Andre Ward, he didn't win Sergey's belts they were taken from Sergey."

James Prince - Manager of Andre Ward

"We're excited about June 17, as we were the past year when we took care of Goliath over here. We know what we had to do with them, and now June 17 is right around the corner. I don't know if Sergio's manager repeated everything that Sergio was saying. It seemed to be a disconnection going on. I don't know if he wanted to say what he was saying. I think they're confused today as they're going to be on June 17 in the ring when he sees he can't accomplish the things he wants to accomplish.

"I said it to him yesterday and I'll reiterate it today. For some reason, I get the feeling that he thinks somebody is scared of him. Bullies think that way. He feels like he can say things and impose fear in men of God's heart. I told him men of God, we don't fear nothing because we know no weapon formed against us shall prosper. I know Andre Ward doesn't need any help with him, with the threats he's making and feeling like he wants to hit Andre Ward in his head. A word to the wise, to all that's listening - do what you got to do in the ring, because you're in a place that's called town business. We don't play those kinds of games outside of the ring. Let's stay focused and attempt to try and hit him in the head in the ring, because you're going to have problems with that. But you'll have real big problems outside of the ring.

"Andre Ward's team means something to him. When we speak, our words carry value. For you to get up here and act like what we're saying doesn't mean anything, maybe that's how it goes on in Russia but in the United States of America we put value in what we say. Once again, the United States of America shall be victorious on June 17, and no weapons formed against us shall prosper."

Egis Klimas - Manager of Sergey Kovalev

"Talking is very, very cheap. Trust me, I've been in this business for a while, and I've seen it many times. Managers, trainers, promoters coming in and talking a lot of shit into the microphone. But then it comes to the night, these are the two men that are going to go in the ring, and they're going to fight. Nothing to do with the promotion, nothing to do with the

manager, nothing to do with the trainers. Trainers might be giving them the advice, but these two guys are going to survive.

"You can't lie to the people's eyes with what they saw on November 19. I'm not going to talk about it. I'm not going to go there because it's already history. Forget about it. I want everybody to see who's going to be coming to Vegas on June 17, what is going to happen. I want to thank everybody who's involved in this fight and putting it together, HBO Pay-Per-View. I want to thank as always the media because without you guys nobody will know what happened here."

Virgil Hunter - Trainer of Andre Ward

"It's a good fight coming June 17 against the most dangerous and most feared light heavyweight in the world, Sergey Kovalev against a lucky victorious man in Andre Ward. So, I guess this fight here will pretty much settle it. I think if you look at the realistic facts of it all, I think only Sergey's been in the media talking. I think Mr. Klimas should understand that we haven't said a word. The other side has talked about ending people's careers to knocking you out to insulting God almighty. All that's coming from this side so we understand what goes on and I think it's a lot of doubt, it's a lot of anger. I don't see Coach Jackson here today and to be honest I don't expect to see him June 17 because you got to put the blame somewhere.

"I'm looking for a real good fight. Sergey Kovalev is definitely not underestimated. I don't have a problem saying that before we fought I was a fan of his. I'm still a fan of his. I just won't be a fan of his on June 17. This is not me blowing smoke. I admire his skill. I always knew that if we came across each other that it was going to be a tough fight, difficult fight, and a fight of attrition. And I expect the same thing June 17.

"I think Andre said it best when he said somebody's will was going to be broke in that fight. But it would be nice to go into that without biting the hand that fed you. Everybody's an expert from the reporters to the announcers when it comes to judging a fight. All of a sudden, they were all wrong that night. So, I think that's an insult to what goes on in boxing. I think it wasn't right. I think it was wrong particularly since HBO has built Sergey into the star that he rightfully is. Like I said before and I'll say today, I'll challenge anybody to sit with me and show me where he won the fight. He fought a hell of a fight because he's a hell of a fighter, but he didn't win the fight.

"So, I guess all of the answers will be answered June 17. My advice is relax, don't be uptight. You can't drink year in and year out and expect at some point for it not to catch up to you and I would bet money that if we could go internally and see inside that that's one of the causes that's causing him to get fatigued now. It's not the overtraining, it's not this and it's not that. It's just guys are standing up and going 12 rounds now. But you can't drink vodka year in and year out and expect on fight night to fight somebody like Andre."

Tony Walker - Vice President, HBO Pay-Per-View

"On behalf of my Executive Vice President Peter Nelson and the rest of the staff at HBO I'd like to thank everybody for coming out to talk some big-time boxing today. First, I want to thank Michael and Kathy and their staff at Roc Nation and Main Events. It's not easy putting big time fights together no matter how much everybody wants it - and the fighters wanted it. The promoters worked and we have here June 17 one of the biggest sporting events of the year.

"I would also like to thank, as Michael did, the community of Oakland. This has always been a boxing city. We have great viewership numbers from Oakland and the entire Bay Area no matter who seems to fight. So, we appreciate the support - we love the support you give Andre. A great home-grown guy in every way and we know that we're going to do some big business here in the Oakland area and throughout the Bay Area for the fight.

"I would just like to say that the fight will be distributed by all the usual distributors, the cable, the satellite and telephone companies and I guarantee you a good picture, great sound, and a great broadcast that night for the suggested retail price of \$54.95. We think we have the best broadcast team in the business and its going to be a fun night to gather friends and the family for a great sporting event.

"I would just say that when a lot is on the line, as there is in this fight, there's drama - and there's no better TV then when drama is involved. So, thank you very much and we hope if we don't see you in Las Vegas hopefully you'll get a chance to watch it on HBO Pay-Per-View."

Ward vs. Kovalev 2: "The Rematch," a 12-round mega-fight for the WBO/IBF/WBA Light Heavyweight World Championships, is presented by Roc Nation Sports, Main Events, Andre Ward Promotions, Krusher Promotions and Corona Extra, and is sponsored by Monster Products and Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino. The championship event takes place Saturday, June 17 at the Mandalay Bay Events Center in Las Vegas and will be produced and distributed live by HBO Pay-Per-View® beginning at 9:00 p.m. ET/6:00 p.m. PT.

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