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Contact:  
Main Events



## Sergey 'Krusher' Kovalev International Media Conference Call Transcript and Audio

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LOS ANGELES (Oct. 16, 2019) - Sergey "Krusher" Kovalev (34-3-1, 29 KOs), hosted an international media conference call yesterday to discuss his upcoming 12-round bout against Canelo Alvarez (51-1-2, 34 KOs) for Kovalev's WBO Light Heavyweight World Title. Kathy Duva, CEO of Main Events, also participated on the call, along with trainer Buddy McGirt. The event will take place Saturday, Nov. 2 at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas and will be streamed live exclusively, as one of the most-anticipated events this fight season on [DAZN](#).

Below is a transcript of the call:

KATHY DUVA: Welcome, everyone. We're here to discuss the upcoming historic fight between Canelo Alvarez and Sergey "Krusher" Kovalev for Sergey's WBO Light Heavyweight Title which will take place November 2nd, 2019 at the MGM Grand Garden Arena. Tickets are on sale now through [axs.com](#).

The fight will be streamed on [DAZN](#). The DAZN live bouts will involve Ryan Garcia versus 'Ruthless' Romero Duno to unify the vacant WBC Lightweight Title, with the NABO Lightweight Title.

Bakhran Murtazaliev will take on Jorge Fortea for an IBF Junior Middleweight Eliminator.

Seniesa "Superbad" Estrada will take on Marlen Esparza for the vacant Interim WBA Women's Flyweight Title.

On the undercard, Evan Holyfield will make his professional debut against Nick Winstead.

Meiirim Nursultanov will take on Cristian Olivas in a ten-round middleweight battle for the WBC USNBC Middleweight Title.

Blair "The Flair" Cobbs will take on Carlos Ortiz for the vacant NABF Welterweight Title, Uzbek prospect Bechtmir Melikuziev (2-0, 2 KOs) will compete in a super middleweight bout, and rising 17-year-old prospect Tristan Kalkreuth, 2-0, of Duncanville, Texas, will return in a four-round cruiserweight fight.

**BUDDY MCGIRT:** Listen, I'm excited about the fight. I just think that they picked the wrong veteran to mess with when they picked Sergey. They should have found somebody else. The world will see on November 2nd that Sergey Kovalev is the real deal.

**SERGEY KOVALEV:** Hello, everybody. I want to say that I'm really excited about my next fight with Canelo Alvarez. I must show the world that I deserve to be the best in light heavyweight division.

This is huge goal in my boxing career from when I was a young guy. Canelo is really talented and really famous, so this is a lot of pressure to me, but believe me, I'm in boxing already since I was 11 years old and I should be fine. It's nothing for me. I should just get inside the ring and do my best job.

I'm really happy that I'm still in the business on the top level of boxing. I can't wait for November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Thank you.

**KATHY DUVA:** And I think I can amplify his comments only to say that I had a conversation with a Russian reporter the other day who has known Sergey, and he mentioned that Sergey, since this past summer, has changed. He's different. What's changed? What's different? I don't understand it. It's clearly the introduction of this fantastic team. Buddy McGirt being, if not the best, one of the best trainers in the sport, and Teddy Cruz, his physical trainer. Both made a huge impact.

I think Sergey's resurgence is a tribute to not only their efforts, but Sergey being a real champion showing what real champions do.

**SERGEY KOVALEV:** I want to say one more thing that right now I have a great team with great coaches - Buddy McGirt and Teddy Cruz - and right now I'm feeling really comfortable with my team. In our team I have good emotions, and right now all of us follow our dream and get victory over Canelo.

**KATHY DUVA:** Thank you. It really does show, speaking as a member of that team.

**Q.** Sergey just fought in August against Yarde, and, relatively speaking, it was a quick turnaround, particularly for a veteran fighter. I wonder if there were any accommodations that made for that fact as you train for this fight? Anything you had to change because of the quick turnaround?

**BUDDY MCGIRT:** All I can say is the only thing we had to change is not having to come to camp full force because he was already in shape. We just took it day-by-day, nice and easy, nice and slow. We didn't have to get in shape like we normally do. Didn't have to lose weight like normal. I think it's a blessing that it was a quick turnaround.

**SERGEY KOVALEV:** Yes, yes. For me yes, it's not enough rest between the fight, but I really like that I fight often, with a short rest. I don't like four, five months or more than four months rest. This is killing me. I am getting lazy. I am getting busy with my family.

But now just a small rest, like three weeks, three to four weeks, and I'm ready. I'm back again to training camp. Now it's really, really good under control with Buddy McGirt and Teddy Cruz. Right now, I'm feeling good.

**Q. Just to make clear, you like the fact that there was a short turnaround as opposed to a much longer layoff?**

SERGEY KOVALEV: I like it, yes. I like short rest between the fights. One month enough, you know.

**Q. Just how surprised were you that a middleweight like Canelo Alvarez called your name? Because Oscar De La Hoya, his promoter, and Canelo, have said your name several times I think even before the Daniel Jacobs fight, that this would be a fight they would be interested in. I think a lot of the fans and reporters were like, 'he can't really be serious about that.' But he did call your name and now you're fighting him. How surprised were you compared to many others that thought this was not really a fight he was serious about?**

SERGEY KOVALEV: I respect Canelo because he goes right now up two divisions, and this is a huge goal for him and also for myself. Canelo wants to try get title in light heavyweight division, and if he will not get the title nobody will say, 'Eh you lose.' He has nothing to lose. He is just trying.

But I should defend my title. I will defend my title. If I lose, I lose more than Canelo lose. Canelo, he is trying to make his history but I'm here. I'm in my position.

**Q. You mentioned that he wants to make history, which he would if he is able to capture this belt. I know you don't know the answer because I don't think you've had the conversation, but what is your feeling? He took and called you for this fight because he genuinely wants to make the history, or he sees you as a big name who's vulnerable, but also somebody that his broadcaster would accept other than the third GGG fight?**

SERGEY KOVALEV: I don't think that he is avoiding the fight against GGG, but he now wants to make history. He wants to face me because I am the best in the light heavyweight division.

His fights against GGG what happen, will happen. It doesn't matter. Canelo win the fight November 2nd or not. I think he just want to try to make history.

But we will see on November 2nd. Like I will be in the ring and we will be ready for everything what he will bring.

**Q. You've had so many big wins in your career. I'm thinking about Bernard Hopkins, the two fights against Jean Pascal, the revenge match against Storm Alvarez. In all the fights you've had - when you went overseas and won the title against Cleverly - would a victory against Canelo, even though he's a smaller fighter, but because he's such a huge name, would you think in the later stages of your career if you win this would be the biggest win of your career? I would like Kathy's opinion on this also.**

SERGEY KOVALEV: You know, if Canelo go to 175 division, that means that his body is ready. Yes, he is a shorter height, but his weight will be on fight day more than 175, I'm sure.

Maybe he no longer like losing the weight, because he's tired long time, long boxing career, still losing the weight. But I know he would like fighting with a full stomach. (Laughter.)

**Q. Would you consider it your biggest win?**

SERGEY KOVALEV: Yeah, it's going to be my biggest win. Yes, of course. This is the biggest name I fought after Bernard Hopkins.

**Q. Kathy? You promoted all those big fights.**

KATHY DUVA: Yeah, I think Sergey said it exactly right. He's the biggest most marketable name on his record, and that, in the eyes of fans, makes it the biggest, of course.

**Q. How is it working with Buddy McGirt and what does he bring to the table?**

SERGEY KOVALEV: I'm really happy that I found this coach. I met with Buddy long time ago. I came in U.S. in 2009 and I met with Buddy 2011 or 2012 at some boxing fight, but I never thought that Buddy can be my coach. But right now, everything has happened for a reason, and I started working with Buddy McGirt and Teddy Cruz and I'm really happy.

I really like to work with them. We will see what will be on November 2nd, but I'm sure that this will be the great fight.

**Q. Did he teach you more than you already knew?**

SERGEY KOVALEV: Buddy gives me everything right - that I lost after losing control of the trainings. All my titles that I had, three title before my first loss and I had used all my amateur experience to get those titles. But then I would have big rest between the fights, and I lost all my technique, because I didn't have good coach in my training camp. Nobody controlled me. Nobody give me instruction what I should to do. I did everything by myself.

When I lost the fight, I get to work, then another fight, another fight. I started looking for the right coach who can help me, and I found Buddy McGirt.

**Q. Sergey, this is a question about your motivation in the fight and what the fight means to you. You're 36 and closer to the end of your career than the beginning. You also stand to make a career-high payday in this fight. A lot of people said you've already won simply by signing the contract. The question is: What would a win in this fight mean to you? How motivated are you to come away with a win on November 2nd?**

SERGEY KOVALEV: I am really motivated for my future boxing career. I would like two more great years. I can fight easy, because right now I have a great team and great coaches like Buddy McGirt and Teddy Cruz who really help me.

Right now, really big motivation to get victory over Canelo, because after this victory there are more opportunities that will be in front of me.

**Q. Same question to Buddy. If you can talk about the energy in the camp and what a win would mean for you and your team, if you guys come out on top.**

BUDDY MCGIRT: Well, the camp is great because everybody gets along. Everybody trusts everybody. We have a relaxed mood and we know what we have to do, so it makes for a good camp.

As far as if we win, the statement should be *when* we win, because I believe in my heart that Sergey is going to win this. It's not going to be as hard as people think.

As far as myself, it's not about me right now. It's about Sergey making history. It's not about me. It's about Sergey.

**Q. Buddy, how open is Sergey to different styles, strategies? How coachable is he? I know you worked with Arturo Gatti, are you going to do the same thing with Sergey Kovalev?**

BUDDY MCGIRT: Sometimes when we're in the gym Sergey comes to me with ideas, and they make sense. Like he said earlier, he got away from what he did best in the amateurs. He showed me a video of the amateurs and I'm like, 'What happened to this guy?'

He goes, 'Well, when I started knocking people, I got away from it.' I'm like, 'We've got to get back to this.' He goes, 'But I'm the Krusher.' I said, 'Well, now you're going to be Smart Krusher.'

That's what I say, people underestimate his boxing IQ because he's always knocked everybody out. He's smarter than people give him credit for.

**Q. Is he open to different strategies in case his forward pressure and his professional style that he adopted...**

BUDDY MCGIRT: Oh, yeah. We discuss it. If he feels something, he'll let me know when we get to the gym, and if I feel something, I let him know. We're on the same page at all times.

**Q. How is it for you to be the underdog, a decided underdog in this fight? That hasn't been the case yet in your career where your opponent is viewed as big favorite. Does that motivate you? Paid any attention to that?**

SERGEY KOVALEV: I don't worry about if I'm the underdog or not. I just feel like we will be in the same ring, and everybody will be in the same position one-on-one, one against one.

The end will show who's the best. Canelo is a very talented boxer and really experienced. And believe me, I'm right now getting really good instruction from my team and very good training camp. Everything goes very well.

We will show to the boxing world that Krusher is here. Krusher is back.

**Q. Canelo obviously has a history in Las Vegas of winning close decisions or certainly getting the benefit of the doubt on scorecards more often than not. Does that make you feel any pressure to have to beat him by knockout, or are you okay with the fight going the distance? You've also lost a very close decision in Las Vegas yourself.**

SERGEY KOVALEV: I will follow instructions from Buddy McGirt, what's the plan? The plan will begin after the first round. Every minute I will follow his instruction after each round what he will be saying to me.

**Q. So, you don't feel like you need to knock him out to win the fight I guess is my question?**

SERGEY KOVALEV: Yes, but that's not my goal. My goal to get the victory, by any costs. By knockout is very well, yes, of course.

**Q. Obviously there is another very meaningful light heavyweight title fight on Friday. Wondering your thoughts on the Beterbiev-Gvozdyk fight and of course I would assume you would like to fight the winner if you beat Canelo, correct?**

SERGEY KOVALEV: Of course. I should beat Canelo, and the next fight I will be open for unification fight. Right now, I have a concentration and focus on Canelo fight.

I will watch this fight for sure this Friday, and we'll see who's the best of these two guys. I think like one of those guys will get victory. (Laughter.) Not like a draw. Somebody will win.

**Q. When Canelo Alvarez spoke to us on his call last week, he was asked about his body attack. He's a tremendous body puncher, and you have shown that you have had some problems when guys attack you to the body. He said that will be a big part of what he plans to do in the fight. How do you make sure that doesn't become a factor in the fight? I'd like your opinion and Buddy's since you have to come up with a game plan to defend against the body shots. Buddy, do you have any thoughts about that particular part of Canelo Alvarez's game plan?**

BUDDY MCGIRT: I mean, it's obvious that's his game plan, because that's one of his biggest tools, is body punching. And for the record, nobody likes to get hit in the body. I don't give a shit who you are.

What we did was we ordered these XXXL shorts for Sergey and we are going to pull the shorts up to his chest and then we'll be okay. (Laughter.)

The question is what's going to happen when Canelo gets hit to the body?

**Q. Sergey has shown in the Yarde fight as well as many other fights in his career, he has a superb jab. It's very heavy. It's very much like a power shot as opposed to a jab. How significant do you believe that Sergey's jab is going to be in the fight against Canelo?**

BUDDY MCGIRT: Well, the main thing is to avoid those type of instances where we get in there and let Canelo feel comfortable. No matter what he tries to do, the key is to make him uncomfortable in anything that he tries to do.

That only happened to him one time, and that was in the Mayweather fight. Mayweather made him uncomfortable and he really couldn't get in his groove. After that, he became a better fighter and he was able to dominate everybody.

**Q. The jab is such a big punch for Sergey; it does so much damage. Just wondered how much emphasis is there for you in the camp to make sure he shoots that down the middle against a smaller guy who has probably never been hit with a shot like that from a guy as big as Sergey Kovalev?**

BUDDY MCGIRT: Funny thing is since the Alvarez rematch I've never had to remind Sergey again about the jab.

**Q. Very good. Sergey, maybe you could address that. How important is it to have a heavy jab against Canelo Alvarez?**

SERGEY KOVALEV: I never punch really hard my jab. I just do my jab; that's it. It's hard because I have like heavy bones maybe. I don't know. But I not make it hard like that by myself.

**Q. I mean, your last win was with a jab.**

SERGEY KOVALEV: Yes, it was by jab. I don't know. But I didn't punch really hard. Maybe in the fight against Canelo I will make it more harder and we'll see. Just fight will show everything, who's the best.

**Q. Sergey, you have bounced back now from some losses and are facing a very big fight. Do you think because of the journey you've had you appreciate this opportunity more now than you would have ten years ago? You think you have a different mental approach to it?**

SERGEY KOVALEV: Ten years ago, I was younger and didn't have enough experience. But now I'm ten years older and more experienced. Ten years ago, I came in U.S. with the amateur experience only. Now, I'm getting day-by-day, fight-by-fight, professional experience with Buddy McGirt and Teddy Cruz.

I'm really excited to work with this team, and thanks to God that everything's happen for a reason. I'm happy.

**Q. Do you think you're ten years wiser also? Is that just as important?**

SERGEY KOVALEV: Yes, yes. Now I am more smarter, yes, right.

**Q. And Kathy, do you think this is an important factor - you've seen Sergey a long time - in his road to getting here, that he is wiser, and his attitude reflects an approach that's going to serve him well now?**

KATHY DUVA: I think that as the journey he has been through, as painful as it was, from time-to-time, as we all experience life, the pain is the thing that teaches us. It's the painful times that make us better in the long run. It's the hard knocks that make us more careful about what we say and do and think.

I think that's everybody's life experiences. Sergey has had some real obstacles in his way in recent years, and as painful as it was, as Sergey keeps saying, things happen for a reason. This is what led him to this particular team at this point in time in his corner. I think that it has all worked out exactly as well as it possibly could.

Now he will go into this fight knowing he has every chance that he could possibly have to win and feeling good about it. As he keeps saying, I'm happy, I'm happy. That's what is showing. That's what I'm seeing. I'm seeing the smile on his face that I saw leading up to the Cleverly fight. I hadn't seen it in a long time.

It's been a pleasure to watch this and be able to be in such a significant fight at this stage in his career is the reward for all of the work he's done and all he's been through to get there.

**Q. In the negotiations for this, I know Sergey was unhappy with Vegas. I mean, I know this is a big fight and probably had to take it anywhere. Was there any talk about going anywhere other than Las Vegas?**

KATHY DUVA: As a dynamic of this negotiation, just made that impossible. We got the fight we wanted; we got the money we wanted. The way to get that money is to go to a place where you can generate it. We're realists. We asked, as always, for judges who will be fair. We hope that the commission recognizes that we don't want the names of the judges or the referee to be the story.

We're going to be where the crowd is going to be very much pro-Canelo. We know that happens. We know judges are influenced by those crowds, and I can talk a lot simply to that.

But what Sergey needs to do is fight like the veteran that he is. He needs to win and dominate round by round. He needs to not go in there head hunting trying to get a knockout. He knows that now.

Again, the experience he's had has informed that. If you look at the scoring in the first six rounds of the first Ward fight, he was ahead. Clearly.

He let Ward back in the fight. He got tired and we've addressed those issues with this new training situation. I don't think that's an issue anymore.

He needs to get out there and win and dominate, just as he did with Alvarez the second time and frankly as he did with Yarde. We went and re-watched the fight, there was about 20 seconds during one round in which he was having a little bit of a hard time.

But he dominated that fight, and that's what he needs to do.

**Q. Sergey, obviously Canelo is looking to do something not many people have even attempted moving up two weight classes. Do you feel like you, as the champion and someone who has fought in light heavyweight far longer than Canelo is more confident in knowing that you are the bigger guy against the smaller guy in Canelo going to be making his light heavyweight debut?**

SERGEY KOVALEV: Every fight for me is very important, but this fight is the most important because there is now a guy who makes the move like two divisions and want to beat me, to get my title.

This is very important for me, more important to defend my title, because like now he is a guest in my division. My plans are different, and after the fight with Canelo I will follow for my dream.

With this fight very good for boxing fans. I'm ready. I'll be ready with my team to defend my WBO Title.

**Q. The fight against Anthony Yarde back in August, after the fight, did you immediately think that physically you were ready already to face Canelo Alvarez? Did you need to take maybe a few days to sort of think about it and decide whether or not you were ready to face, or not ready to face, but at least hoping you're physically ready enough to face Canelo on such a quick turnaround?**



SERGEY KOVALEV: I have great coach now and I believe them what they tell me. Teddy Cruz and Buddy McGirt is the best coaches in the world and I believe them 100%.

I think they can really help in the fight against Canelo.

**Q.** Kathy, obviously this has been a fight that's been in the works for sure several months. What sort of change in those initial pre-Yarde negotiations versus now that sort of allowed the fight to come together? Almost fairly quickly after the Anthony Yarde fight, was it the fact that Sergey really needed to get that mandatory out of the way and that kind of drove a wedge in the negotiations?

**KATHY DUVA:** Yes, prior to the Yarde fight, early on we weren't getting the kind of offers we needed to make the fight. By the time the offer came we were just too far down road with Yarde. As Sergey made very clear at the time, he felt an obligation to go and fight in his hometown. He didn't want local fans to think he would turn his back on them just because he was offered a lot of money. We had already gotten through that, the biggest issue, which was the money.

Just a week after that to get Golden Boy back to where they were in the summer. There was a lot less to talk about the second time around, and so it came together a lot more easily. And we didn't have the obstacles of having to fight the mandatory.

Thank you everyone, as always, for your interest. I think boxing thrives when we have these big fights. This is one of those nights when you can call your casual friends to make sure they watch because it is going to be a great one.

**Canelo vs. Kovalev** is a 12-round fight for the WBO Light Heavyweight World Title presented by Golden Boy, Main Events and Krusher Promotions. The event is sponsored by Tecate, "THE OFFICIAL BEER OF BOXING," Hennessy "Never Stop. Never Settle" and Brand-New Grapefruit Crush, *Knockout Flavor*. The event will take place Saturday, Nov. 2 at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas and will be streamed live exclusively on [DAZN](#). The title clash is one of several highlights this fight season on DAZN - an entire fall featuring boxing's biggest matchups in one of the best schedules in boxing history.

Tickets for Canelo vs. Kovalev are on sale and are priced at \$1,754, \$1,254, \$854, \$654, \$404 and \$204, not including applicable service charges and taxes. To charge by phone with a major credit card, call 888-9-AXS-TIX (888-929-7849). Tickets also will be available for purchase at [www.axs.com](http://www.axs.com).

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