

Cory Spinks - Five Likely Future Opponents

Written by Matthew Aguilar

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Tuneups can be a tricky proposition. They're designed to make the favorite look eye-popping, and provide him some work at the same time. But when the favorite just gets the work part of it, criticism is sure to follow.

Cory Spinks beat Miguel Angel Gonzalez Saturday - as expected. But the fashion in which the undisputed welterweight champ chalked up the victory was less-than-spectacular. At times, the "Next Generation" seemed to struggle with the wily veteran. He was tagged on the chin in the first round, and he seemed to wobble for just an instant. Gonzalez's aggression and even his power seemed to bother Spinks ever-so-slightly.

That's not good when the challenger is a decade past his prime and performing 12 pounds over his natural fighting weight. So, the tuneup that was supposed to provide something of a breather for Spinks and whet the boxing public's appetite for future superfights did just the opposite.

It made Spinks look boring and vulnerable. But is the Gonzalez fight an accurate barometer?

Here's a look at Spinks five most likely future opponents, and his chances against each:

Antonio Margarito: Easily Spinks' most formidable challenge, Margarito is a pure puncher who is entering the prime of his career. He does have a stiff test at junior middleweight Saturday against Daniel Santos, but if he gets past that, Spinks would be the most logical next step for him. Spinks' southpaw style would surely provide the hard-charging Margarito some major problems, but it may not take much to get the "Next Generation" out of there. Give Spinks a slight edge because of championship experience. But not much. **Odds:**

Spinks 2-1

Winky Wright: It's not as though Spinks has cleaned out the welterweight division, but a matchup against Wright would be attractive nevertheless. Both Wright and Spinks are tall, rangy southpaws with loads of skill and are well-learned in the fundamentals. But Wright is stronger, punches harder and possesses the better chin. It would be a good one for about eight rounds. Then Winky's natural advantages would take over. **Odds: Wright 3-1**

Kostya Tszyu: This would be a matchup that would pit two of boxing's undisputed champs. And it would probably be a good matchup. Tszyu is advancing in years, and his body is seemingly coming apart at the seams. But he'll have knockout power in either fist until the day he retires. That would be more than enough to make him a threat to Spinks. However, the welterweight champ would enjoy the same strength advantage that Wright would enjoy over him. And boxers bother Tszyu. **Odds: Spinks, 2-1**

Arturo Gatti: This would be one way to make a Spinks fight interesting. Gatti has been the most exciting fighter in the game since 1996, and whether it's a knock-down, drag-out,

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back-alley brawl (vs. Wilson Rodriguez), a loss (vs. Ivan Robinson twice), a win (vs. Micky Ward) or a quick knockout (as in his last fight against Leonard Dorin), Gatti is always exciting. But he's a natural junior lightweight, and he'd be at a severe size disadvantage against Spinks.

Odds: Spinks, 3-1

Floyd Mayweather: Perhaps Spinks' stiffest test, Mayweather is the one fighter who would legitimize Spinks as a pound-for-pound champion - even if he would be at a major size disadvantage. This pair almost went at it after the Judah fight in April, and the bad blood surely hasn't disappeared. Spinks is quick, but he'd be at a decided speed disadvantage against the blazing Mayweather. And what he couldn't block would probably connect on that shaky chin. The flip side to that coin is that Mayweather's chin may be suspect as well - especially at this weight. And Spinks' southpaw style may trouble Mayweather, too. When all's said and done, probably a pretty good scrap.

Odds: Even

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