

McCline-Brock Fight Offers Some Intrigue

Written by Charles Jay
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Make no mistake about it - this is a damn good show, even if Ebo Elder is not involved. There are some interesting angles associated with all three fights comprising ESPN's Pay-Per-View event tonight in Las Vegas; perhaps the best one surrounds the fight between Jameel McCline and Calvin Brock, in which somebody is going to step out as an American heavyweight to be reckoned with in the near future.

My old friend and associate Johnny Bos was the advisor to McCline and practically brought him up from the time he first stepped into a gym, which was rather late in life, as his first assignment was as a sparring partner for Tim Witherspoon. McCline was certainly limited in ability at the start, but through careful matchmaking, steered by Bos for then-manager Alan Wartski, he was built into a contender, and was on the brink of winning a portion of the heavyweight title not once but twice.

However, like a lot of fighters, once McCline got near the top he decided he didn't need some of the people who got him there. So he made a management change, and Bos was out.

Not long afterward, the fight was made with Brock, who has had Bos as an advisor from the start of his pro career. Brock's best opponents as a pro are Terry Smith and Clifford Etienne, while McCline has fought a succession of top-flight opponents, including Wladimir Klitschko, Chris Byrd, Shannon Briggs, Lance Whitaker, Michael Grant and Cedric Boswell. And McCline showed something in battling tooth-and-nail with the guy with the most difficult style in the division (Byrd). Could it be a case where Bos might have encouraged his charge to jump into the fight with McCline too soon for the sake of extracting some revenge?

"No, revenge didn't play into it," he says. "Look, I've got a guy who's thirty years old (Brock), and you've got to take a shot with him against somebody. Jameel doesn't have the greatest chin in the world, and Calvin can punch. And whatever happens, if he fights a good fight he's going to elevate his stature in the division. So on our side we've really got nothing to lose."

It could just be that Bos is playing a hole card here. As someone who was required to find the right opponents for a talented but raw fighter on the way up, he had to know the strengths and weaknesses of that fighter (McCline) better than anyone else. And along the way one can develop a sense of what is going to bring a particular brand of trouble. He figures he knows what McCline might be susceptible to, and thinks he might have some of that with Brock.

"Calvin is 6'1"," says Bos, "and look at the some of the guys Jameel didn't beat - Sherman Williams, Gary Bell, Ron Guerrero, Chris Byrd. These guys were 6'1" or smaller. The shorter guys have had a tendency to give him some problems."

It could indeed be Brock's turn to fly. He probably possesses better fundamental tools than McCline, and with his Olympic appearance and nearly 200 amateur fights, his own overall level of experience may be comparable to that of McCline, who never had an amateur bout.

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SportsInteraction has listed McCline at -172, with Ladbrokes and Olympic Sports closely behind at -175. McCline is -188 at Paddy Power, -189 at BetInternet.com, and -190 at Diamond Sports International (DSI). Brock brings back +170 (wager a dollar to win 1.70) at Expekt.com, +155 at Olympic Sports and +150 at Victor Chandler and DSI. Clearly the guy with less pro experience is getting more than just a little respect from the oddsmaker.

DSI is offering numbers on the exact outcomes. For example, McCline is +185 to win a decision and +175 by win inside the distance. The real value here, if you feel the outcome may be in doubt, is to go with the 7/2 odds (+350) you can get for Brock to win a decision.

Looking at distance propositions, the number is 9.5 rounds at 5Dimes.com, Bet365, Olympic Sports and the World Sports Exchange. At the latter three, the under is a -120 favorite. Bet365 makes you lay -120 either way, with Olympic Sports offering even money on the over and 5Dimes giving a takeback of +105. At Pinnacle Sports, the line is 8.5 rounds, with the over favored by a -120/+110 margin.

Shane Mosley returns to the welterweight division with a fight against David Estrada, something Sugar Shane needs to be relatively careful about. With one win in his last six fights, any air of invincibility is gone for Mosley, and in Estrada he gets an opponent who doesn't approach his experience level and hasn't defeated championship-caliber people, but who should remain strong as the fight progresses. Defeating Nurhan Suleymanoglu, who had over 300 amateur bouts, among them a win over Kostya Tszyu, was not a small thing, and his stoppage of Chris Smith demonstrated that he could win a battle of attrition against a tough, old-school fighter. This kid is a "stayer," and he won't be held back for lack of effort.

He's also brought Angelo Dundee squarely back into the mix. Angelo has not taken a very active role with many fighters recently, but Estrada has gotten him very excited. When I first met Angelo, it was right before Sugar Ray Leonard fought Marvin Hagler, and I hear the same kind of confident talk now from him that I did then.

"He's not being thrown to the wolves fighting Sugar Shane Mosley. He's got a great shot to beat Sugar Shane Mosley," said Dundee in a recent interview. "And I respect the heck out of Sugar Shane. But this kid of mine is a better fighter than anyone's seen, so I got that going for me. He can be a world champion. That's why I'm messing with him."

Considering his past accomplishments, Mosley is understandably the favorite. You'd be laying a big price with him - as much as -1000 at SportsInteraction, Bet-at-Home.com or Intertops, and not much less at most of the others. DSI, however, has him laying just -650, and at Pinnacle Sports he's at -605, with a takeback of +545 with Estrada. You can get 5/1 (+500) at a number of locations, including SportsInteraction, Coral Sports, DSI and Olympic Sports.

At DSI, you can get on the "plus" side with Mosley by grabbing Shane to win by either decision (+105) or KO, TKO or DQ (+120), Estrada is a big 15/1 to win it inside the distance.

The over/under looks like 9.5 rounds across the board. The best takeback price on the underdog "under" figure might be +120 at Bet365, with +105 at Olympic Sports and +114 at

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Pinnacle. You'll lay just -120 on the over at Olympic Sports and Pinnacle.

Another intriguing matchup has Antonio Margarito providing the toughest career test for up-and-comer Kermit Cintron, who will seek to test the chin of the Mexican, which has been the subject of criticism from time to time.

Cintron has been knocking everybody out, but many of those opponents were "prospects" who never really panned out, like Said Ouali, who subsequently lost to 44-year-old Manning Galloway, or guys who were sliding just a bit, like Elio Ortiz or Teddy Reid. Sure he can punch, but is there more than one way he can win a fight? According to most observers, Cintron was taken to school in one fight earlier in his career when he came away with a "Pennsylvania decision" over Leon Pierson, a journeyman who knew many of the tricks of the trade. Antonio Margarito is a more complete all-around competitor than Cintron is probably used to fighting, so if he wins, he will have crossed a very important bridge.

This fight is very close to being a pick 'em; in fact, at Olympic Sports you would lay -110 with either fighter. SportsInteraction has Margarito at -118, with Ladbrokes right behind them at -120. You can get +110 on Cintron at a few places, including Intertops and StanJames.com. Pinnacle actually has Cintron the ever-so-slight favorite, at -107/-103.

At DSI, the fight is -130 to go under 10.5 rounds. The number is 10.5 rounds at Olympic Sports, where the over is favored by a -135/+115 tally. Bet365, on the other hand, has the same 10.5 rounds with the UNDER favored at -132 (you lay -111 on the over). Incidentally, at DSI you'll get a much better price on Cintron to win inside the distance (+150) than you will with him by decision (+470).

(All information is presented for entertainment purposes only. Odds posted were current as of late Saturday afternoon. Odds naturally are subject to change, so check first with each individual sportsbook.)