The memories linger, drifting in and out, simply refusing to vanish forever.

This week, with Felix Trinidad preparing to fight Winky Wright, the memories float to the fore once more, taking us on a trip back to that September evening in 1999. It is hard to compare fights. It is even harder to compare fighters. But who can forget that night when Oscar De La Hoya made Felix Trinidad look slow, look frustrated — before inexplicably taking a vacation for the final three rounds?

Perhaps this is too harsh a criticism.

But some had such very high expectations for Trinidad. He appeared to be something special — until the September night De La Hoya made him look pedestrian. And make no mistake, Trinidad has been something special. He has been a great champion with a big punch and a bigger heart. But, quite simply, a gifted boxer with great movement like De La Hoya made Trinidad look somewhat dull, even a bit ordinary that night.

Those are harsh criticisms for the man who won that fight.

But those expectations were there, perhaps weighing Trinidad down like heavy legs in the final seconds of a 12-round war. Those expectations turned into memories, memories that will never go away. And now Tito will fight another boxer with great movement, a fighter who has that frustrating gift of movement and guile. Is he De La Hoya? Or does he even need to be that good? Saturday night we find out.

There are so many questions about this battle.

Will Wright have the right answers in the ring? He certainly had the right answer before the opening bell: “Can I take Tito’s best punch? I don’t intend to find out.”

Get into a slugging match with Trinidad and you could have a short night at the office. But Wright, like De La Hoya, seems to know better. He could easily — and probably will — turn this into a long night for Trinidad.

Some question the Wright resume. But he has been the opponent for most of his career, going into hostile environments and calmly taking care of his business. It is not likely he will be overwhelmed by this moment, his step onto the biggest stage of his career. Being the opponent, far from home, battling in the backyard of another fighter, is a far more daunting task than squaring off against the pomp and circumstance of center ring at this circus. Do not expect the bright lights of this setting to blind him.

Some may question Wright at this weight. He has proved himself as the best at 154. Can he dance the dance at 160?

Wright appears calm about the move: “I’m not jumping 13 pounds and two weight classes. It’s just six pounds and it’s my natural weight.”

Saturday night they touch gloves and begin to bang. Trinidad will have to knock Wright out to win. Wright said, “I don’t have to knock out Tito to win this fight.” And he is right.

The memories float in again, drifting in like smoke ... Trinidad-De La Hoya.

Trinidad-Wright will almost certainly perpetuate those memories, then add its own chapters.