

Tszyu-Hatton Fight Predictions

Written by Robert Ecksel
Thursday, 02 June 2005 19:00

After a week off for good behavior, The Sweet Science writers return to form by predicting the big fights. The bout this weekend on Showtime between the champ Kostya Tszyu and his capable challenger Ricky Hatton should be a humdinger. When Tszyu fights it's always a special occasion and Saturday night should be no different. Hatton, like all Tszyu's opponents these days, is no creampuff, but does he have enough for the Thunder From Down Under?

Tszyu by first round KO.

Mitch Abramson

Hatton is as live an opponent as Tszyu has faced in four years. He is young, powerful and relentless - a combination that could severely bother a fighter who was out of the sport for almost two years because of injury. Further, a petrified Sharmba Mitchell may have made Tszyu look better than he is at this stage of his career. But Hatton is also green, and has never faced an opponent as powerful and skilled as Tszyu. And Hatton's defense isn't exactly impenetrable - which should spell disaster for young Ricky. Hatton will be cut and battered courtesy of a furious Tszyu onslaught when the fight is stopped in the 7th round.

Matt Aguilar

Ricky Hatton is young, strong, aggressive and tenacious. He is a good puncher, not a devastating hitter, but more of a thumper. He has heavy hands as well as seemingly having a stout chin and a big heart. What he does not have is the right style to beat Kostya Tszyu. Kostya is a better all around boxer than he is given credit for. He is smart and knows how to lure opponents in to traps that enable him to get off with solid counter punches. Kostya is an extremely hard hitter and a great finisher. I look for Hatton to put up a game and honest showing but it will not be enough. The style needed to beat Tszyu was employed by Vince Phillips and will be copied and improved upon by Floyd Mayweather Jr. if he and Kostya ever square off. I have to go with Kostya by TKO between rounds seven and ten.

Jim Amato

Kostya Tszyu has been a great champion, but all great title reigns end. Now is the time for his to end. Hatton will be inspired by the hometown crowd and his whirlwind style will lead him to a unanimous decision win. Kostya has the edge in power, but I'm thinking this fight goes to the more determined fighter, not the puncher . . . a la Vito Antuofermo-Cyclone Hart and Tex Cobb-Earnie Shavers

Robert Cassidy Jr.

This will come down to the cards, but a UD for Tszyu. Both fighters are hard punchers with excellent knockout-victory ratios (Tszyu 31 victories, 25 KOs; Hatton 38 victories, 28 KOs). Indeed, Hatton has the advantage with his 70-inch reach over Tszyu's 67 inches. At 26, Hatton has longevity on his side. But Tszyu's edge is history. He's taken on more tough opponents than Hatton. This will pay off for Tszyu in picking apart Hatton early and much later.

Jesse K. Cox

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When the fight was first announced, I thought Ricky was nuts for going in blind. By that I mean taking on one of the greatest 140 lb fighters in boxing history without so much as facing even B-level competition. But the closer we get to fight night, the more I believe that this is simply more than a cash out fight or a learning experience for Manchester's finest. I think Ricky will surprise everyone early by using a lot of in and out movement, while staying busy. Tszyu will eventually find a way to impose his will on Hatton, but will be forced to expend a lot of energy and absorb a ton of body punches before doing so. So long as Ricky can stick to his proposed game plan of a "subtle swarm," I think he holds off a late Tszyu rally and picks up a well-earned unanimous decision and the junior welterweight crown. Hatton UD12 Tszyu (not a misprint).

Jake Donovan

This seems like an easy pick, which is why it scares me. Though he's getting older, Kostya Tszyu still has his firepower and I can't see Hatton avoiding it for an entire fight. Tszyu by KO in the middle rounds. Maybe.

Rick Folstad

This one has all the markings of a classic slugfest. From the opening bell you can expect fireworks. I can see both guys getting cut early but rarely taking a backwards step. The end will come around the sixth round, with Tszyu's hand being raised in victory.

Randy Gordon

We'll finally find out how great Ricky Hatton really is. These fighters have taken on two totally different calibers of opposition. Tszyu's road has been much tougher. Hatton's advantages are youth and activity, but Tszyu is just too powerful and too experienced. Kostya Tszyu TKO 8.

Tim Graham

One must be cautious when evaluating a great fighter based on his last bout which came after a long layoff – something many discovered painfully watching Felix Trinidad go down in flames against Winky Wright. Like Trinidad, Tszyu came back from a long layoff and stunned the boxing world with a thorough beating of a very good Sharmba Mitchell. Many did not see the limits of Ricardo Mayorga's ability because they wanted to see the greatness of Trinidad once again. It is possible that the same thing is happening here with Tszyu. The central difference however, is that Mitchell is likely a better fighter than Mayorga. It is also the case that Tszyu has proven his ability to adapt and mix boxing with punching against tremendous opposition (Zab Judah among them). I'm betting Tszyu still has enough resourcefulness in the tank to stop a very determined and able contender in Ricky Hatton. Hatton has faced limited competition in defense of his obscure WBU title but has demonstrated a ruggedness that is likely the real thing. Expect him to give his best effort and see many applaud his valiant effort. Expect Tszyu to show his full repertoire of boxing skill and sharp punching. Tszyu by KO in 8.

JE Grant

I'll say Tszyu to win. He's the better, harder fighter.

Amy Green

Hatton would appear to be the latest of a familiar species: the well-protected British boxer carefully nurtured on unthreatening opponents who has developed a loyal and rabid cult

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following over there in Old Blighty. He is unbeaten in 38 fights (35 of which took place in England), and for the past several years has masqueraded as a "world champion" despite never having fought Tszyu, Mickey Ward, Arturo Gatti, Zab Judah, Vivian Harris, Sharma Mitchell, Jesse James Leija, Leonard Dorin, or, for that matter, anybody currently rated among The Ring's Top Ten 140-pounders. Ray Oliveira may have been his most dangerous opponent to date -- and Ray was 37 by the time Hatton fought him. Balanced against this is the fact that Tszyu has fought less than nine rounds in two years. Kostya once got stretched by Vince Phillips, so he certainly isn't invincible, but the pick here is Tszyu in six. The Brits will be so insufferable if it goes the other way that it's painful to even think about.

George Kimball

I don't see how Hatton can beat Tszyu other than a big shot landing - and that can happen. Still, Tszyu is so composed and such a good tactical boxer I don't think Hatton gets to him before he gets to Hatton. If Hatton tries to bum-rush the champ he will be picked apart coming in. If Hatton sits back then Tszyu will jab-right all night. I doubt Hatton has ever been hit as hard as will on Saturday and he did taste the canvas courtesy Eamonn Magee. Tszyu is a maniacal trainer and has been getting better with age. Kudos to Tszyu for traveling to England and taking on the young lion, and to Hatton for taking the huge step up in class. Tszyu by TKO around the 7th or 8th round.

Joey Knish

Ricky Hatton is not a bad fighter, but he is nowhere close to being in Tszyu's league. The champ chews him up and spits him out in four rounds.

Marc Lichtenfeld

After the way Tszyu dispatched Mitchell, it's hard to imagine him not beating Hatton, even in the latter's hometown. Tszyu is way too strong and experienced, and should stop Hatton by the eighth round.

Bob Mladinich

I've grown to like Hatton in this fight, but I'm not sure if it's purely based on balanced critique or whether the SKY Sports trailers are beginning to nest in my subconscious. Hatton, for all his record padding, has become a well schooled 12 round practitioner and is capable of rising from adversity (Magee), overcoming crisis (Thaxton), outboxing opponents (Tackie), overwhelming volume punchers (Olivera) and avoiding punishing right-hands (Phillips). There isn't much Hatton hasn't seen. However, in Tszyu he's facing one of the best fighters in the world: tactically astute, technically advanced, powerful, experienced, motivated and strong at the weight. In truth, Tszyu is arguably as complete a fighter as there is in the modern game and to take a more cynical view of Hatton's "education," fighting worn-out title challengers and blown-up Lightweights is poor preparation for a bout of this magnitude. To pick Hatton is to make a quantum leap into the unknown. It is to park substantiated evidence based on opinion and go with the heart, to go with hunger, to go with youth over class and experience. I just can't bring myself to do it. TSZYU by points decision.

David Payne

There was only one Hitman. His name was Thomas Hearns. I've seen Kostya Tszyu fight; I've

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read a lot of what Ricky Hatton has said about what he is going to do to the transplanted Down Under Russian. Right, Ricky. Tszyu by decision.

Pat Putnam

Since he was a tyke in grainy videos, Ricky Hatton's showed almost ADD-like enthusiasm for punching -- not boxing. But when his opponents wilted, his hand was raised -- winner of a boxing match -- more aptly; they succumbed to the weight of numbers. It won't happen Saturday. Hatton will share 20 feet with as skilled a technician, concussive puncher and ring general, as deserves to hold a title -- the consummate professional. If anybody else could lay claim to "The Executioner," it's Kostya Tszyu. With almost 400 fights, amateur and pro -- and still the face of a cherub -- and not too imposing a physique, he doesn't strike fear until he lands the first numbing blow. Then it's: Man alone with a shark circling. Hatton will come out like a house afire -- the only way he knows -- what's got him this far...And he'll fight bravely -- with everybody in the Men Arena behind him -- for as long as he has strength in his body. Round five, the latest. (The playing of "Blue Moon" could carry him one more.) Hatton will be hurt and stopped, and come back another day. It doesn't make him a bum to be beaten decisively by one of the best to ever put on gloves.

Joe Rein

Kostya Tszyu should be commended not only for taking on the formidable Ricky Hatton, but for fighting him on his British home turf as well. This is a tough one to call. The Thunder from Down Under looked like he had not missed a beat in his bout with Shamba Mitchell last November. But then again, we all said the same thing about Felix Trinidad. In this young lion versus old lion match, I am going to go with youth. Hatton by split decision.

Aaron Tallent