

Vince “Cool” Phillips Still Chillin’

Written by Joey Knish

Wednesday, 15 March 2006 19:00

Friday Night on ESPN Vince “Cool” Phillips continues his quest for one more big shot when he tackles Jesse Feliciano at The Roxy in Boston, Massachusetts.

Now 48-9-1 with 34 knockout victories, the former IBF Light Welterweight champion seems to have finally settled in as a Welterweight after bouncing around between 140 and 155 pounds over the past few years. The stability in weight has allowed Phillips to focus on one goal, and that is to be world champion once more.

While the idea of fighting Kostya Tszyu in a big payday rematch fades with each passing day – Phillips was tied with Tszyu on the scorecards when he stopped the Russian-Australian in the tenth round to win the IBF 140-pound belt in 1997 – Phillips has been forced to set his sights elsewhere. Most recently, the 42-year-old fighter dropped hard-hitting Kelson Pinto (23-2-0, 21 KO) on his way to a 5th round Technical Decision victory.

Phillips has always been the type of fighter who would take on anyone who wanted to do business, but finding rising stars or current champions willing to meet the Florida-born Phillips is another matter. The problem with Phillips is that he is too dangerous for his own good.

As 34 knockout wins suggest, the guy has some very good power, but as 9 losses indicate, he is someone a current titleholder is “supposed” to beat. So if a fighter beats Phillips, he was supposed to – if he loses to him he was beaten by a 42-year-old with 9 losses on his resume. It’s a no-win/high-risk proposition and it’s no wonder “Cool” is still chillin’ on the outside looking in. He has called out the likes of Tszyu and Arturo Gatti, but so far no one has answered.

When Phillips went to Ontario, California to beat Pinto he did so with Pinto’s promoters putting on the show, and prior to that traveled to Ciudad Juarez in Mexico to knock out Mauro Lucero (41-11-1) to claim the WBC Continental Americas Welterweight title that he currently holds.

Win, lose or draw, Phillips has fought just about everybody – Pinto, Alex Bunema, Ricky Hatton, Sharmba Mitchell, Nick Acevedo, Ray Oliveira, Ricky Quiles, Vernon Forrest, Terron Millett, Freddie Pendleton, Micky Ward, Tszyu and Ike Quartey. One would be hard-pressed to find a fighter today who has been in with better opponents than Vince Phillips.

He was the first fighter to ever stop Micky Ward (TKO 3 on cuts), something Arturo Gatti couldn’t do in 30 rounds of action, handed Nick Acevedo (15-1-1) his first loss, and in 2003 lasted twelve rounds in Manchester, England against Ricky “The Hitman” Hatton.

Gatti couldn’t stop Ward but Phillips did. Tszyu couldn’t last the route with Hatton yet Phillips did.

Now Phillips wants either of them but they don’t want him.

Vince "Cool" Phillips Still Chillin'

Written by Joey Knish

Wednesday, 15 March 2006 19:00

That all leads us to Friday night as Jesse "El Rayo" Feliciano looks to play the role of spoiler as Phillips tries to keep winning and stay on track. While Feliciano has won just one of his past six bouts, he has been in with some very high level opposition without a break to get a winning streak going of his own. He has fought six times the past two years starting with a Draw against Al "Speedy" Gonzalez (13-0-0 at the time) in February 2004. "El Rayo" then lost by TKO 8 to Mohamad Abdulaev (13-1-0), was stopped by Mike Arnaoutis (10-0-2), dropped a Unanimous Decision to 19-1-0 Oscar Diaz, beat Rafael Ortiz and then was stopped in four rounds against super prospect Demetrius Hopkins (21-0-1).

It seems Feliciano (13-5-2, 8 KO) has been unfortunate to go through a tough string of opponents, but as his win over Raul Franco suggests he is a game fighter. The native of Guayanilla, Puerto Rico is nearly 20 years younger than Phillips and has been gaining experience the hard way against some very good fighters.

Phillips is not the type of fighter to take a night off and on Friday Jesse Feliciano must be the best he can be to have a shot, and even that may not be enough. Phillips is determined and focussed to fight his way into one more big payday, or one more title shot, both of which he feels he deserves.

Unfortunately for Vince "Cool" Phillips, fighters who have earned their big shot don't always get it . . . and some not until they are shot themselves.