

Juan Diaz Discusses Cotto

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Q: Anything in the Cotto bout surprise you?

A: "I was surprised by the way Cotto came out in round one. He was throwing more punches than I expected and fighting in a different style than I'd seen him fight. He was using his jab more . . . After the first round I said I better get busier or this is going to be a long night."

Q: When did you feel that you were taking over the bout?

A: "In the fifth or sixth round Ronnie Shields told me to box Cotto and that he wouldn't be able to touch me if I did. I started using my jab more and boxing more, and I felt pretty comfortable after that . . . The key was the jab. Every time he set up to throw something, I'd pop him with a jab or two and he wouldn't be able to get off . . . He showed great sportsmanship when it was over. After the decision he shook my hand and thanked me for the opportunity to challenge for my title . . . It was a tough fight, but there are other fights that I've had that I consider tougher, like the Ubaldo Hernandez fight. That was the first time I was knocked down and cut."

Q: Next is your mandatory against Lakva Sim, the fighter you beat for the title. Any thoughts?

A: "Sim is a good, tough fighter. But I can't help but wonder whether the fight will happen or not because I was supposed to fight him three times already. It's not his fault. Things happen. I just wonder whether something else will happen to prevent the fight. I want to fight him again because he's a worthy challenger. I think he's one of the top-5 lightweights in the world."

Q: Should you get by Sim, who would you like to fight?

A: "There are lots of guys up there at the top: Castillo, Corrales, Freitas. I'd like to fight any of them—any of them who will give me the opportunity . . . Castillo's style probably matches up best with me because he comes straight forward and I come forward. It would make for a great fight."

Q: Is it difficult going back to class after a big fight like Saturday's?

A: "Yes, it is. When I got home on Sunday all I wanted to do was rest and watch TV, but I had to force myself to do some homework . . . This week is especially important because I have exams, so I have to get on it."

(After our conversation Diaz left the gym to go home and prepare for his afternoon classes at the University of Houston Downtown where he is a junior with a 3.0 GPA who majors in Government. Today Diaz had to attend three courses: Corrections & Criminal Justice, Policing in America, and Criminology.)