

Clotney-Gutierrez Winner Gets Antonio Margarito Says Bob Arum

Written by David A. Avila
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What's on the line for the winner of the welterweight contest at Chumash Casino on Saturday?

How about Antonio Margarito.

Joshua Clotney (28-1, 18 KOs) meets Colombia's Richard Gutierrez (19-0, 12 KOs) and the winner gets a crack at WBO titleholder Margarito later this year.

"I think Margarito will definitely fight one of those guys," said Top Rank's Bob Arum on Tuesday while in Los Angeles. "Both will be fighting for a shot at Margarito."

Clotney, 29, who fights out of New York but is originally from Ghana, will trade blows with Gutierrez, 28, an undefeated knockout puncher who has never been truly tested against A-level welterweights.

With Floyd Mayweather Jr. waiting out a potential golden bonanza with Oscar De La Hoya, and Baldomir gunning for Mayweather or WBA titleholder Ricky Hatton, the likely suspects for Margarito are Clotney and Gutierrez.

"Floyd Mayweather is now like Donald Curry (former welterweight champion during the late 1980s) was years ago," said Arum while at the LB4LB Gym in West Los Angeles. "He stopped fighting anybody because he was hoping to get that fight with Sugar Ray Leonard and it never came."

Arum said the logical move for Margarito is to fight the winner of the welterweight showdown and let the dust settle among the other 147-pounders. Though Mayweather and Margarito could generate interest, the money Pretty Boy Floyd can make strapping gloves against Oscar De La Hoya dwarfs anything else. So Mayweather waits.

"Floyd is one of the most astute fighters in the history of boxing," says Arum. "I personally think Margarito is too big for Mayweather."

Whoever gets Margarito will be fighting in Atlantic City says Arum.

"Margarito is the best welterweight in the world," he said.

Explosive welterweights on Saturday

A slew of intriguing junior welterweight and welterweight bouts take place this Saturday when Vivian Harris tangles up with Stevie Johnston and several other contests. Chumash Casino in Santa Inez hosts several potentially explosive bouts that also include welterweight contenders Joshua Clotney and Richard Gutierrez. The fight card is promoted by Gary Shaw Productions and will be shown on HBO.

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In the main event Harris faces Johnston who substituted for Mighty Mike Arnoutis who suffered an injury from sparring. Johnston's insertion makes this bout even more titillating.

So what do you watch? Roy Jones in a non-title fight in Boise, Idaho, or Harris, Johnston and Clotley at Chumash? By the way, Clotley's only loss was to Carlos Baldomir seven years ago. It's a big night for pro boxing.

Baby Doll Reid

Elena "Baby Doll" Reid says she's fighting Mary Ortega for a flyweight world title on Aug. 31 in Lake Tahoe, California. The spunky Las Vegas resident has engaged in two world title bouts, both in Germany, against that country's great Regina Halmich. Reid fought to a draw and a loss, but she's confident of grabbing the title this time. "I've been training hard as always. I never stop training," said Reid who is trained by Chris Ben. "I'm anxious to fight again. It's been a while."

Toney sighted

James "Lights Out" Toney attended the Wednesday night fight card in Ontario. He's busy preparing for his showdown against hard-punching Samuel Peter at the Staples Center on Sept. 2. Also in attendance was Javier "Monster" Mora who will also be fighting on the same card. "Tell my fans everything is good," said Toney.

Sergio Mora in preparations

The Latin Snake has been digging in at his sweltering gym in Montebello. Sergio Mora will be facing Eric Regan, a 6-foot-4 power puncher whose two losses were to Mexico's Pedro Ortega and a split-decision loss to Darmel Castillo of Panama. He's sparring with Rogelio Vargas and Eddie Sanchez, both tall boxers. More on Mora next week. Dean Campos and John Montelongo are his trainers and are busy looking for sparring partners for the winner of last year's The Contender.

Bolo and Nightmare Close to a Deal

California's two best young heavyweights, Chris "The Nightmare" Arreola and Damian "Bolo" Wills, are inching closer to meeting inside the ring. Arreola is in Big Bear working with Hasim Rahman who is preparing for his fight against Oleg Maskaev in two weeks. Arreola says "it's destiny" and guarantees the fight will happen this year. Terry Claybon said Team Bolo is waiting for a contract. "These are the two best young heavyweights in California," Claybon said. "Chris is a good fighter with knockout power and Bolo has a lot of power and a lot of heart too. It's a natural."

Humberto Soto and Ivan Valle

It's one of the better matchups on the Aug. 12 fight card at Thomas and Mack Center but few are talking about it. Humberto Soto, the fighter who took the 0 out of Rocky Juarez's record, will be tangling with Ivan Valle, a hardnosed knockout puncher. Both are out of Mexico, both are tall

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for their weight class, both love to throw punches, and both are rugged fighters out of Los Mochis. If you don't know about the city of Los Mochis, boxers who come out of that town are even tougher than those who come out of Philadelphia or East Los Angeles area. It's the kind of place where fans think you're a sissy if you fight on your toes.

It was curious to see Valles sparring with Jose Armando Santa Cruz while Soto watched the proceedings. You could feel the tension. Soto sneered most of the time as he peeked looks at the sparring at the L.A. gym on Tuesday afternoon. The fight will be held at junior lightweight.