For Zab Judah to remain as a relevant earner in the sport, he must beat Miguel Cotto on June 9th in New York. Virtually no one outside of his family and his often profane and passionate fan base thinks Judah can withstand more than six rounds of Cotto whacking away at his torso before he succumbs, like he did in 2001 against Kostya Tszyu. But if there were ever a time when Judah was on message, and in a zone where he comprehends that his professional window may be closing on him, it is now.

The 29-year-old Brooklyn native lost to Carlos Baldomir to kick off a dreadful 2006, and followed that with the Mayweather Melee loss three months after that. After a year suspension for his role in the tenth round meltdown, Judah came back against Ruben Galvan in Mississippi, but that fight didn't get out of the first round, as Galvan was cut from a butt, and the fight deemed a no contest.

Will Judah be too rusty to stave off one of boxing's most determined forward movers, the offensively minded Puerto Rican who, his promoter Bob Arum hopes, reaches the level of mass popularity that fellow Puerto Rican Tito Trinidad enjoyed from 1998-2001?

The WBA welterweight titlist Cotto, on a media conference call on Wednesday afternoon—and we have a sworn statement from Top Rank swearing that it really was Cotto!—said that he's expecting Judah to be at the top of his game. Nevertheless, the Caguas Killer says his strength will prove to be the overriding decider on June 9.

"Does he have the stamina to stay with the same power for twelve rounds? I've had the best camp of my life, I feel in good shape. Zab needs to win to put his career working again, but it's my time, I'm going to destroy Zab on June 9th."

Cotto wouldn't tab Zab as his toughest foe to date, stating that he'll know if that is the case on June 10th.

Cotto said he isn't living in the past, and isn't unhappy that Judah will be across from him on June 9 at MSG, and not WBO welter champion Antonio Margarito.

"Margarito chose to fight another opponent for less money," Cotto said. "That was the problem there."

Bob Arum chimed in, saying that bygones are bygones, and besides, Margarito has agreed, if he gets past Paul Williams (and that is by no means a sure bet) on July 14, that he will meet Cotto (if Cotto handles Judah). That consolidation fight would happen in November or December, Arum said.

SPEEDBAG Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. fights Grover Wiley on the June 9 undercard. Wiley (30-9-1) beat Chavez' pop in dad's last fight, in 2005, so it figures that sonny boy will be looking

for blood. Arum said he'd like to match Chavez Junior against Arturo Gatti.

I should say, dad's "last fight." You never know, until the coffin is glued shut…

--Arum took a slap at ODLH, Mayweather and Jermain Taylor when he promised "there'll be no dancing, no businessmen fighting. You asked Miguel's plans for the future. He said he'll fight anyone we put in front of him. He's a fighter, not a businessman like some of the guys you'll see. Boxing needs not take a back seat to anyone, not any mixed martial arts event."

--The Garden and Top Rank opened up 3,000 mezzanine seats, at $50, to meet demand. The show will sell out, Arum said.