

Margarito After Cotto Win: "My Turn Now"

Written by David A. Avila

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Puerto Rico's Miguel Cotto completed his task last weekend, now it's Mexico's Antonio Margarito's turn.

Cotto's win over Zab Judah sets up a possible meeting with WBO titleholder Margarito in September. The only thing standing in the way is big Paul Williams, the number one welterweight contender in the WBO.

Margarito (34-4, 24 KOs) and Williams (32-0, 24 KOs) clash on July 14 at the Home Depot Center in Dominguez Hills. The fight will be shown on HBO.

"Tony is really excited about fighting Cotto if he beats Paul Williams," said Sergio Diaz, Margarito's co-manager who watched the fight on television with Margarito. "He was already excited now he's even more anxious."

Both Margarito and Cotto were originally scheduled to meet last Saturday, but the Mexican champion was informed by the WBO that he would be stripped of his title should he skip Williams and take the fight against Cotto.

He opted to hold on to his title.

"I worked too hard to get this title and defend it," said Margarito, 29. "I want to meet Cotto as a champion to a champion."

Cotto did his part by whittling down Judah's defense round after round. Though the Brooklyn fighter had some early moments catching the Puerto Rican with left hands early in the fight, it wasn't enough to keep the Puerto Rican slugger from mauling his way to victory.

"Tony was worried when Judah caught him with that uppercut and left hand," said Diaz who watched the fight with Margarito. "After the first two rounds Cotto did his job well."

Now all attention is toward Margarito and Williams.

"I'm going to mop the floor with him, you can take that to the bank," said Williams, 25, during a press conference last week. "I am going all in for this fight."

Margarito and Cotto who are both promoted by Top Rank, were ready to meet last Saturday. But Williams, the number one mandatory, forced Margarito's to fight him.

Williams had been chasing an opportunity to fight one of the welterweight contenders during the last two years. Though he had been promised a match by Margarito, he opted to get his opportunity now instead of possibly later.

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Now it's Margarito's turn to perform his task.

“He will not be the first undefeated fighter I've beaten,” said Margarito. “Cotto did his job, now it's my turn.”

Winners over the weekend

Humberto Soto knocked out Bobby Pacquiao the younger brother of Manny in the seventh round with a right hand to the head followed by a left hook to the ribs. That was painful to see and proves that Oscar De La Hoya's knockout loss to Bernard Hopkins by a similar body shot was not put on. Body shots do hurt, especially to the ribs.

Manny Pacquiao was in the audience. According to Top Rank, the Filipino super star wants a crack at Mexico's Soto. Gulp.

WBC light heavyweight titleholder Chad Dawson stopped Mexico's Jesus Ruiz with a blazing combination in the sixth round. Next up could be former champion Antonio Tarver who out-boxed Elvir Muriqi over 12 rounds.

Fights on television

Wed. ESPN2, 6 p.m., Edner Cherry (21-5-2) vs. Wes Ferguson (16-1-1).

Thurs. Versus, 6 p.m., Kid Diamond (24-1-1) vs. Miguel Huerta (23-8-1).

Fri. ESPN2, 7 p.m., Lucian Bute (19-0) vs. Sakio Bika (22-2-2).

Sat. HBO, 9:30 p.m., Paul Malignaggi (22-1) vs. Lovemore N'Dou (45-8-1); also, replay of Miguel Cotto (30-0) vs. Zab Judah (34-5).