

Margarito Wants Mexican vs. Puerto Rican Bout

Written by Ralph Gonzalez
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It looks like former WBO welterweight champion Antonio Margarito is hoping for a lucrative showdown against Puerto Rican star Miguel Cotto. This is assuming of course, that Cotto gets past "Sugar" Shane Mosley on November 10th.

Margarito (34-5, 24 KO's), of Tijuana, Mexico will take on Golden Johnson (25-7, 18 KO's) as part of the well stacked under card. Johnson, the NABF Welterweight champion, is coming off a quality TKO win over Oscar Diaz and should make things somewhat complicated for the hard brawling Mexican.

The question is, what happened to Paul Williams? Williams took a close decision over Margarito and relocated the WBO belt to his waist. You'd think a rematch would be the first thing on Margarito's mind after such a close loss.

"I wanted the rematch against Williams immediately but Bob (Arum) decides what we do," said Margarito. "Paul Williams will be there down the road and if his people want to make a fight then we'll do it again."

Margarito and manager Sergio Diaz realize that a fight against Cotto is the smartest wager on the table.

"If we can get a chance at Cotto we're going to take it," said Diaz. "We'd be crazy not to. Paul Williams was a tough fight and we'd like to eventually face him again. It was a very close fight."

And you can bet that the folks at Top Rank promotions are praying for Cotto and Margarito victories. The Mexico vs. Puerto Rico rivalry lends itself to an easily promotable and very lucrative Pay Per View event.

"We know that some of the greatest fights are fought between Mexican and Puerto Rican fighters," said Margarito. "I'm hoping Cotto wins since I think the fight will be big in Mexico and Puerto Rico. It's a passionate rivalry."

Margarito was anointed as the most avoided man in the welterweight division by himself and some in the media, a claim further fueled by #1 Pound for Pound king, Floyd Mayweather Jr., when he reportedly turned down an eight million dollar offer to tangle with the "Tijuana Tornado".

Never at a loss for great quotes, promoter Bob Arum still believes Mayweather didn't want anything to do with Margarito or anyone else with a shot at beating him.

"I think the question should be phrased differently. Would Floyd Mayweather, the dancing star, ever face Cotto or Shane Mosley?" said Arum when questioned on the subject. "Mayweather would never fight Margarito or any of these guys so forget Floyd Mayweather. He can keep

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throwing away hundred dollar bills at night clubs or whatever he does.”

In the meantime, Margarito prepares for Johnson in Los Angeles under the watchful eye of conditioning coach Javier Capetillo and sees his loss to Williams as a lesson that will ultimately benefit him.

“I think that the loss to Paul Williams was a mixed blessing,” said Margarito. “Some of the better fighters will think I’m more beatable now and I’ll get the fights I want.”

For now, Golden Johnson remains the target.

“He’s a smart and experienced fighter. It’s not an easy fight by any means,” said Margarito. “That’s why I’m going to come in at a hundred percent so there will be no surprises.”

This is Margarito’s big chance. He’s been working at it since he was sixteen years old when he had his first pro fight in Tijuana. Now he’s one win away from a big pay per view showdown.

“It’s all about the sacrifices,” said the twenty-nine-year old.

“Eventually all the sacrifices pay off. I’ve been waiting since I was sixteen. I have to win this fight to make everything I’ve dreamed of happen.”

Although he’d rather see the Puerto Rican as the winner, he wants an opportunity at either man.

“Cotto or Mosley. I hope the winner will give me a shot,” said Margarito. “If it’s Mosley, then great. I know he’s got an excellent shot at winning but naturally I’d like to see Cotto win.”

Of course it should be Paul Williams in this position. But this is boxing and what makes sense isn’t always what happens. And let’s not forget that Mosley and Johnson could realistically alter any plans for a Mexico vs. Puerto Rico showdown.

“I know that could happen and I’m aware of it but all I can do is my part and show up in the best condition possible,” said Margarito. “Everything else is in God’s hands.”

The Margarito/Johnson fight will come on before the Cotto/Mosley main event from Madison Square Garden in New York City. Also on the under-card will be former world champion Joel Casamayor vs. Jose Armando Santa Cruz in a lightweight clash. Opening up the H.B.O. Pay Per View will be Oxnard’s rising prospect, Victor Ortiz, taking on former Junior Welterweight champion Carlos Maussa of Colombia.

Ring Bytes: Former superflyweight champion Martin Castillo took a ten round unanimous decision over Johnathan Perez in a decent performance on Friday night in Chicago. I don't think "Gallito" is back to his former self yet but he's making some progress. The word is that he'll fight Jorge "Travieso" Arce next. That's going to be a tough one for Castillo. His fans hope he hope he can get into the same mode he was in before he first defeated current WBA titlist Alexander

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Munoz when he looked like a virtuoso in the ring.