

Margarito Calls Out Oscar

Written by Ralph Gonzalez
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“I sparred with Oscar a few years ago,” new WBA welterweight champion Antonio Margarito recalled. “And I have to say that I definitely put my hands on him. I don’t think he’ll be getting in the ring with me any time soon.”

“Oscar told us he would never fight Tony,” confirmed Margarito’s manager Sergio Diaz. “If Steve Forbes got to Oscar the way he did, can you imagine what Tony would do to him?”

Margarito looked like a real life terminator against Puerto Rican star Miguel Cotto in stopping the former two division champion. In Cotto, he outwilled and outfought someone who was considered an elite fighter. One of the world’s pound for pound best. It was a beating far worse than most imagined. Many of the boxing world analysts predicted that the more technically refined Cotto would break down and stop Margarito in the later rounds.

The “Tijuana Tornado’s” performance was so astounding that ugly and unfair rumors started springing up around Puerto Rico that Margarito had fought on steroids. The innuendo was recently squashed when the Nevada State Athletic Commission drug tests came back negative for any type of performance enhancing drugs. Some Cotto fans just couldn’t fathom the fact that Margarito made their idol crumble to one knee after absorbing an incredible amount of punishment.

The victory brought back the buzz that was taken away by Margarito’s decision loss to WBO champion Paul Williams. Dan Goossen, Williams’ promoter, has offered Margarito’s promoters at Top Rank \$4 million for a re-match. Not a bad offer, but the big money’s with De La Hoya. Every fighter wants a piece of the “Golden Boy”. Especially Margarito, who’s been chasing him for years.

But will De La Hoya step into the path of the “Tornado”? Don’t rule out the possibility.

Say what you want about Oscar, he’s never been one to avoid danger. He fought Shane Mosley and Felix Trinidad during their prime. He also faced Bernard Hopkins in a division far beyond his optimum fighting weight.

Of course that was a younger and fresher De La Hoya. The 35-year old Mexican-American boxing icon is now on the verge of retirement. All indications point towards De La Hoya fighting once more before he hangs up the gloves in what’s been the most successful and lucrative boxing career in the history of the sport.

There are rumors that De La Hoya may fight Manny Pacquiao in what would surely bring in some big dollars. Pacquiao’s following coupled with De La Hoya’s drawing power equals big pay per view sales.

To ardent fans of the sweet science, a Pacquiao/De La Hoya clash would be more of a circus

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than a legitimate boxing match. A silly experiment between a fighter that started out as a flyweight and one who fought as a middleweight. Boxing's version of Wrestlemania.

According to a recent report on Notifight.com, De La Hoya is already spinning a potential Pacquiao clash. The "Golden Boy" stated that a bout against Pacquiao would be personal for him since the Filipino allegedly disrespected his company by signing with them first and then ending up fighting for Top Rank promotions. "I accepted Manny and I trusted Manny," De La Hoya said. "When I looked into his eyes and we shook hands I thought we had a deal. But the past is the past and if we see each other in the ring it's going to have to be personal." Sounds a little Wrestlemania-ish to me.

De La Hoya went on to say that he feels he was challenged by Pacquiao and that he accepts all challenges. He mentions a short list of possible opponents like Sergio Mora, his business partner Shane Mosley and Felix Trinidad. Guess who's not on the list?

Pacquiao last fought at 135 lbs. but normally campaigns at 130 lbs. He'd be expected to climb up in weight to 147 lbs. in order to fight De La Hoya. Seems ridiculous to Margarito since he feels there's already a deserving 147 pounder in place. "I know Oscar is looking for a big fight in December," Margarito said. "I'm challenging him. If he says he takes on all his challenges, well, I'm right here. Everyone wants to see this fight. Mexicans, Americans, Puerto Ricans, any true fans of our sport wants to see Oscar step into the ring with me."

Will we ever see Margarito vs. De La Hoya? Not likely, says Diaz. "It's unrealistic. Tony would be Oscar's biggest nightmare," Diaz said. "There are a lot of options out there including Paul Williams. It's been a long time coming for Tony. He got himself a signature win against Cotto and everyone's talking about him."

Everyone except Oscar De La Hoya.