Buried beneath all the hype surrounding Saturday's Oscar De La Hoya-Manny Pacquiao extravaganza in Las Vegas, a fight thousands of miles away for a vacant 168-pound title might just be the most compelling contest of the night.

Carl Froch's showdown with Jean Pascal for the World Boxing Council's super-middleweight belt at the Trent FM Arena in Nottingham may not be the "Dream Match", but among boxing purists it represents a clash of two flashy, unbeaten stylists.

Neither fighter has yet broken into the elite class of the division, but in the case of Froch it hasn't been for a lack of trying. Negotiations with the biggest names have proven futile, as Joe Calzaghe dismissed the Nottingham native's challenge, while Jermain Taylor opted for a more lucrative fight with Jeff Lacy, with Taylor's promoter Lou DiBella admitting that Froch would have posed a more difficult challenge for his fighter.

Moreover, a matchup with the undefeated Denis Inkin for the WBC belt failed to materialize on two occasions after injuries forced the Russian's withdrawal.

In all, the lack of progress has seen Froch grow increasingly disillusioned with the business side of the professional game.

"It's been difficult at times," Froch, 23-0 (19 KOs), said last month. "Some big fights should have happened. I've had two so-called superstars flat-out run from me this year in Joe Calzaghe and Jermain Taylor. But on December 6 you're going to have two undefeated fighters, in their prime, fighting for the world title."

Froch, who is promoted by Mick Hennessy, has yet to encounter a stern test in his six-year pro career, and his only fight in 2008 was against the obscure Albert Rybacki, who was a late replacement for Inkin last May.

Froch's most significant victory to date was a one-sided beat-down of a faded Robin Reid last year. Froch consistently pierced the former champ with sharp jabs and stinging right-hands, flooring Reid on three occasions before the fight was stopped at the end of the fifth round.

The 31-year-old fights with a relaxed style, carrying his left hand low while sizing up opponents for the swift right cross. But on occasions he has appeared lazy against overmatched foes, leading to the development of bad defensive habits that could be exploited by a boxer with Pascal's speed.

Froch's self-assured nature inside the ring carries through to life outside the ropes, as the former Loughborough University student has been unafraid to voice his opinions on British sporting demigods.

Commenting on soccer star David Beckham a few years ago Froch said: “I’m better at boxing than Beckham is at football. He’s great at corners and free kicks and passing, but he can’t tackle and is not an all-round talent.”

And on Joe Calzaghe: “Joe doesn’t pack a big punch and he’s past his best, which is why he hasn’t stopped anyone lately. I wasn’t surprised he didn’t knock [Roy] Jones out [last month] because he hasn’t got it in him.”

But Froch’s Canada-based opponent isn’t lacking confidence either, and the 26-year-old Pascal has no fears about fighting in front of an expected 7,000 partisan fans in Nottingham.

“I have good memories of England,” said Pascal, 21-0 (14 KOs), who was born in Haiti but moved to Canada at a young age and has fought most of his pro bouts in Montreal. “I won gold [at the Commonwealth Games in 2002] against a British guy in front of 15,000 people [in Manchester], so I don’t know why I won’t be able to repeat that. Right now, I can’t wait to be back in the UK because they’re good fans. I can’t wait to show them my skills.”

So far in his neophyte three-year paid career Pascal has stylistically resembled Roy Jones, skating around the ring with a languid guard and slippery defense. He will prove to be a difficult target for Froch, but like the Brit, he is thus far untried in the pro ranks.

His most notable scalp was that of a rusty Kingsley Ikeke, with Pascal cruising to a relatively comfortable twelve rounds point win. Despite his large frame, the gangly Ikeke failed to test Pascal’s punch resistance, giving little indication of how the Canadian will react to Froch’s powerful right cross.

Yet Pascal’s apparent defensive prowess could frustrate Froch, possibly resulting in a taut, highly skilled contest.

But both fighters are preparing for an intensive battle and relocated to camps away from home, with Pascal based in Phoenix, Arizona, while Froch spent six weeks in Ireland, training alongside Junior Witter.

Froch will be hoping to fare better against North American opposition than Witter did last May, when the Bradford fighter lost his WBC 140-pound title to Timothy Bradley. Adding to Pascal’s apparent omen advantage, his promoter Yvon Michel points out that Canadian fighters Donnie Lalonde, Dave Hilton and Eric Lucas have all captured the WBC 168-pound trinket.

Regardless, Froch and Pascal will need to put on a riveting show if they are to make headlines in the boxing world on Saturday. The fight will be available on free network TV in the UK, but will be running in competition with Amir Khan’s comeback fight with Oisin Fagan in London, which comprises the British De La Hoya-Pacquiao pay-per-view broadcast.

But don’t tell the brash Froch that he won’t be making the news. He believes it’s only a matter of time before his performances will attract mainstream publicity.

“I want to get the newspapers to take note of boxing and say [about me] ‘look we’ve got a talent here, someone who is going to dominate on a world level’,” he stated.

“As soon as I unify the world titles everybody will be onto me like a rash.”