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The stitches over the left eye and swollen right hand are temporary souvenirs Carl Froch will take away from his epic encounter with Jean Pascal.

When the battle scars heal and the euphoria surrounding his title-winning victory subsides, the Nottingham fighter will be called upon to repeat Saturday's display of fortitude and guile if he wants to permanently retain plaudits in the unforgiving boxing world.

In overcoming Pascal by unanimous decision, Froch took the World Boxing Council's 168-pound title, and the 31-year-old must now decide whether to defend the belt or seek out a more attractive showdown at a different weight.

Immediately after the fight, Froch said he wants to unify the super middleweight division – that would entail matchups with IBF beltholder Lucian Bute and Mikkel Kessler, who holds the WBA's trinket.

But Froch's promoter Mick Hennessy later said he would attempt to secure his fighter an encounter with former middleweight champion Jermain Taylor. The WBC have designated Taylor as the mandatory challenger for their belt, so in theory the fighters must meet, but the American already turned down the opportunity to fight Froch for the then-vacant title earlier this year.

"Taylor will be a chicken if he swerves me," Froch was quoted as saying. "A fight against him will improve my bank balance."

Yet reports suggest Taylor is concentrating on a possible fight with Bute, who looked vulnerable in his most recent performance against Librado Andrade.

"Taylor is the next mandatory opponent for Carl, but he has to be a man and take the fight," said Hennessy. "It looks like [Taylor is] already looking for the exit signs. He's already looking to fight IBF champion Lucien Bute in his next fight."

But on Tuesday, Taylor's promoter Lou DiBella rejected Hennessy's claims and insisted that his fighter would welcome a meeting with Froch if the new titlist is willing to fight in North America.

Froch has previously stated he would relish a big fight in the US, but given that he sold out the 7,000 capacity Trent FM Arena on Saturday, and the heightened exposure the fight received from mainstream television in the UK and the global boxing media, the Brit's handlers may be wise to build upon their new fanbase.

Hennessy stated that if negotiations with Taylor fail, he would try and coax Joe Calzaghe into an all-British showdown with Froch. Hennessy offered Calzaghe £5 million [nearly $10 million at the time] to fight his charge earlier in the year, but the Welshman turned down the proposal in

favor of a marquee clash with Roy Jones Jr.

Hennessy said he would make an improved offer to Calzaghe, but the current 175-pound titlist appears to have little interest in competing for his old WBC strap. The fight has always been doubtful and retirement seems to be to the forefront of Calzaghe's mind.

"Carl who?" was Calzaghe's flippant response when asked on Tuesday if he would be interested in fighting Froch, 24-0 (19).

The most attractive opponent for Froch from a neutral observer's standpoint is the one that has been least publicized.

A fight with Denmark's Kessler represents a challenge Froch must overcome if he is to attain recognition as the world's premier 168-pounder.

The other major names at super middleweight have all displayed glaring flaws in recent performances: Taylor was knocked out by Kelly Pavlik and faded in the latter stages of their rematch, while Bute was hurt badly by Andrade – a fighter who has a history of struggling against skilled boxers.

Froch, who typically shows little reticence when dismissing the ability of his peers, has always spoken with deference about Kessler, perhaps unable to spot any obvious weakness in the Copenhagen native's game.

"[Kessler] has excellent strength, a good attitude and, being naturally left handed has a great orthodox jab," Froch told the Nottingham Evening Post. "Even though Kessler has been beaten by Calzaghe, he can come again. I know he was injured going into that fight and probably should have pulled out, so he's still a dangerous fighter."

Moreover, Hennessy made little reference to the Dane in his post-fight comments on Saturday.

Kessler, 41-1 (31), has always looked strong and composed in the ring, even in his points loss to Calzaghe last year. He is more technically proficient than Froch, boxing behind the ramrod left jab before unleashing a slashing right cross from a textbook upright stance.

Conversely, Froch perpetually carries his left hand low and has a permeable defense. He would also be giving up his usual height and reach advantages against Kessler, something Froch is not accustomed to.

But one thing Froch has recently familiarized himself with is the pain of an intense battle. He has proven that he can call upon the depths of his resolve to withstand the punishing blows of a world-class fighter and roar back to unload his own ever-forceful combinations. His technique was largely forgotten during the heated moments of the Pascal war, but as recent events have proven, a superfight is never won on paper.

And if Froch wants to continue to electrify his new fans he knows who to call. He admitted it

himself.

“I can’t think of anyone other than Mikkel Kessler who would provide me with a tasty tear-up.”