

## Tony, Shane Only Thinking About Each Other

Written by Ralph Gonzalez  
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They tried to get it out of him but Shane Mosley wouldn't bite. When pressed about the steroids issue that hangs over him, Mosley (45-5, 38 KOs), the highly regarded former welterweight champion deflected perfectly. "Everything is about the fight," Mosley said regarding his upcoming encounter with WBA welterweight champion Antonio Margarito (37-5, 27 KO's) on January 24th at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. "I don't know anything about that. All I care about is Margarito."

The inquiring writer never got the answer he was searching for and his phone line was cut off when he pushed the issue during the teleconference sponsored by the co-promoters of the event, Golden Boy Promotions and Top Rank. (Editor Note: I do not support the act of cutting off the phone line. The steroid issue is a legitimate question, and to cut off the questioner smacks of censorship. –Ed) You can't blame Mosley for dodging questions about his reported past use of performance enhancement drugs. That was then. The Pomona native has a huge task ahead of him in trying to derail the sizzling hot career of the Tijuana fighter aptly nicknamed "The Tijuana Tornado."

Focus and a top rate preparation camp is a must. "You have to be in tremendous shape to beat him," Mosley said. "When you fight someone like Margarito you have to work on everything. Boxing and moving, turning and dipping. Like I always do, I'm going to do my best to get my shots in."

Trainer Nazim Richardson, who also trains the legendary Bernard Hopkins, feels that Mosley's speed will make a huge difference against Margarito. "Speed is always going to be a factor when you face Shane Mosley," said Richardson, who is working in place of Mosley's dad, Jack, who has parted ways again with his son. "It's not just about speed, it's about using it correctly. It's about finding Margarito's vulnerable spots and attacking them."

After witnessing Margarito's crushing and emphatic victory over Puerto Rican idol, Miguel Cotto, Mosley is definitely the underdog among the so called "boxing experts." Cotto's undoing, Mosley feels, was that he didn't know what he was up against in the fierce and determined 30 year old Mexican. "I think Cotto was fighting great for most of the fight but he didn't know what Margarito brought to the table," Mosley said. "I've fought a lot of Mexican fighters so I know what he's bringing. I know that type of style. I know how to pace myself and I know how to throw body shots and Margarito gets bothered by body shots."

Margarito's resistance to punches has been remarkable during his career. Paul Williams and Cotto, two fearsome punchers, tried but couldn't dent Margarito's chin. "I think it's something that people are born with," Margarito said. "The preparation in the gym makes you even stronger and more durable. I don't rely on my ability to take punches. If anything, I'm always looking to get hit less."

Win or lose, it's been rumored that Margarito will eventually face Cotto in a rematch. Some far

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fetches reports have even insinuated that #1 pound for pound king, Manny Pacquiao, might be next on the list. "I've heard about all those things but I don't pay any attention to that. I have a mission and that's to beat Shane Mosley. Nothing will take my focus from that," he said. "If my promoter Bob Arum decides that those are good fights for me then he'll make them happen. For now I'm just thinking about the 24th and nothing else."

After Mosley's less than spectacular performance against Ricardo Mayorga, many spectators felt that "Sugar Shane" lost some of his sweetness. Margarito isn't buying it. "People say that he's not the same as before but I'm not going to take much stock in that," he said. "He's got world class experience and he's a great fighter. I'm at my peak and that's the only thing I'm going to count on. I believe I'll win. It's all about the way I train, that's what always wins me fights."

There were press releases that came out from Mosley's camp questioning Margarito's eagerness to fight during the initial stages of negotiations. "When I heard about the reports, I just laughed. How's it possible that I'm scared of Mosley since I've been the one looking to fight him for years. That was just ridiculous. Now that the opportunity is here I'm going to take full advantage of it."

Thirty seven year old Mosley thinks he will again pull off the big surprise like he did before at the exact same venue against Oscar De La Hoya in June of 2000. "I feel more comfortable and confident right now than when I fought Oscar," he said. "I'm confident that I'll look spectacular and I'm confident that the fans watching around the world will be shocked and surprised."

The event is on pace to sell out the 19,000 plus seat venue.

The undercard:

Robert "The Ghost" Guerrero (22-1-1, 15 KOs) has been penciled in to meet Edel Ruiz (31-21-4, 22 KOs) as part of the supporting show. No disrespect, but Edel Ruiz against "The Ghost"? Really?

Margarito vs. Mosley will be televised live on HBO's World Championship Boxing beginning at 10pm ET / 7pm PT. Remaining tickets, priced at \$150, \$75, \$50 and \$25, are available at the STAPLES Center Box Office, all Ticketmaster outlets, by phone at 213-480-3232 and online at [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com)