

## **CLOTTEY: Cotto Knows I Am Going To Come To Do My Job**

Written by Raymond Markarian  
Monday, 27 April 2009 19:00

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“The champions that do not fight the best are nothing. If you are to go out there and fight the weak, how could you call yourself a champion?”----Joshua Clottey

Joshua Clottey is crossing his fingers that he will make the most of the moment when he takes on Miguel Cotto on June 13th. He works and prays everyday to capture the moment. Clottey excitedly told TSS in a phoner, “I want to be a part of this event. I want to know everything about Cotto and how good he is. I just want to get in there see what he is about. I want to see how well he can really fight.”

Is he crazy? One can only guess; probably no more than any other man who willfully takes on the task of testing his mettle against one of the five best fighters on the planet.

But the opportunity of a lifetime nearly hit a brick wall. A few weeks ago, Miguel Cotto (33-1 27KOs) got into a well publicized skirmish with his uncle and head trainer, Evangelista Cotto. The drama left what many believe to be a gaping hole in Cotto’s camp during a critical time of training. Clottey (35-2, 20 KOs) heard all about the family feud that ensued in the Cotto camp but does not see a reason for the Puerto Rican to be concerned.

“I don’t think he is going to think much about it,” Clottey said. “He is going to be training. He knows who I am. He knows I am going to come to do my job.”

Clottey thinks the scuffle generated strong interest because the media blew it up for the wrong reasons and would like to set the record straight. “People talk, and have created this problem. I don’t think it is going to hurt him at all,” Clottey said. “Cotto comes to fight. And this is the most important fight of my career. I am very sure that it is going to be a great night.”

The Clottey camp, based out of the Bronx, New York, says little about the Cotto family quarrel. Their focus is only on the fight and nothing more. “Cotto’s trainer problem cannot bother me,” Clottey said. “I just do not want this fight to be cancelled. It is my biggest fear. But it is up to God. God is the father of all of us. He will decide. I pray every day for everything to go smooth until we get into the ring and fight.”

Since Ghana native turned professional in 1995, his dream was to become a recognized boxing figure in America. But the 32 year-old quickly learned that the American dream is at times, a fairy tale story. Although Clottey had the skill to compete at or near the top of the welterweight division for some time, he was overlooked by the top-tier talent for most of his career.

“When I was a young boy, I wanted to come to America to fight the best. I wanted to be a one in a million type of athlete. I wanted people to be talking about my name. I did not come into this game to be a contender. I wanted to be a champion.”

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In December 2006, Clottey got an opportunity to make a name for himself in a fight against Antonio Margarito. In what was considered at the time a crossroads bout, Clottey was in control of the fight early on. But during the fourth round, the Ghanaian injured his left hand throwing an uppercut. Clottey proceeded to lose rounds five through eleven on all judges' scorecards enroute to a defeat via unanimous decision. Despite the setback, Clottey received some positive recognition for the performance. And the ever confident Clottey does not give Margarito credit for the victory. "I think in my own heart, that I have never lost a fight before in my life," said the Ghanaian, slyly implying that perhaps Margarito had more than good fortune in his corner that night, while also focusing on the rounds he won before his hand cracked.

Yet no matter how Margarito is being portrayed today, Joshua Clottey commends the Mexican for his brutal knockout victory over Miguel Cotto. In July 2008, Margarito imposed his will on the Puerto Rican, forcing him to back up and fight defensively. Clottey promises a similar approach in his fight against Miguel Cotto on June 13th. He thinks Cotto's biggest weakness is moving backwards.

"I have to do what is best for Joshua. Cotto is a very good fighter you know. If you let him fight, you are going to bring the best out of him. That is why it is smart to bring the pressure."

Clottey admits that Margarito invented the blueprint to defeat Miguel Cotto, pressing the issue. But the Ghanaian does not foresee the same blood-fest in his fight with Cotto. 'Doing what is best for Joshua' means Clottey has to impose his will onto Cotto defensively, instead of walking into punches.

Although Clottey plans to come forward against Cotto often, he will do so with his gloves raised high. "Margarito did what he did but I am not going to do the exact same thing. Margarito and I have a very different style. I see punches when they come," Clottey said. "Margarito has a very good chin. He keeps coming and coming straight at you until he gets inside. I use my defense to get inside. There is a difference."

The anticipation for the bout on June 13th in Madison Square Garden has Clottey pondering his career upside if he hands Cotto his second defeat. He has no problems with Cotto personally, but he knows what a victory can do for his career. "I think Cotto is one of the best. He is a champion. That is why I took the fight," Clottey said. "I really like Cotto as a person. He is very humble. But if I beat him it is going to help me a lot."

Clottey knows boxing politics, knows it might be his last chance to fight against a marquee opponent. And he does not want to be frustrated, waiting in the wings for another willing opponent to have the guts to give him a shot. "Instead of calling my name, there are many fighters that avoid me. If I win this fight, it will make fighters want to challenge me."

Clottey continued by saying, "Look, the guys out there never wanted to fight me. They just want to go in there and feel comfortable. I have always been known as the guy that wants to fight the best. But the best never wanted to fight me. Now I have a chance to prove myself. I am very happy that they are giving me the chance to show who I am."

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### **Slipping The Jab**

David Haye vs. Wladimir Klitschko on June 20th... I can hardly wait. Finally, there is a heavyweight fight worth waiting for. Despite the faults of the Klitschkos or their lack of quality opponents over the years, it has always bothered me to hear boxing experts and fans alike push for a fight between the brothers. Klitschko vs. Klitschko never made sense to me. This is not Venus Williams vs. Serena Williams in a tennis match, or Undertaker vs. Kane in a pro wrestling match, it is boxing, hand on hand combat. Asking brothers to fight each other is immoral. Boxing is a brutal sport and a fight between brothers could be tragic. The answer for the heavyweight division is more confident challengers like David Haye.