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According to recent press reports there have been over 13,000 tickets sold for the June 13 welterweight title bout between WBO title holder Miguel Cotto and Joshua Clottey The fight is being held at Madison Square Garden and marks the fifth time that Cotto will fight the night before the Puerto Rican Day parade. If past history is any indication Miguel will have plenty of crowd support from his countrymen who have adopted him in much the same way they did former three division champ Felix "Tito" Trinidad. Having a big crowd cheering him on will provide Cotto a needed psychological boost for what looks to be a tough fight with Clottey, who appears to be coming into his own.

This will be Cotto's second fight since being battered and stopped by Antonio Margarito 11 months ago, thus losing his WBA welterweight title as a result. The aftermath of Cotto's loss to Margarito has left me with two lingering thoughts. The first being Cotto endured a terrible beating during the last two rounds of the fight before he was stopped. Not only was the thrashing physical, it very easily could have a lasting effect on Miguel for a long time and possibly the remainder of his career.

Since the fight Margarito has been busted for attempting to enter the ring with his fight versus Shane Mosley with hand wraps that contained calcium and sulfur -- which are two primary elements that make up plaster of Paris. This was observed by Mosley's trainer Nazim Richardson when the almost concrete like tape and gauze were being wrapped around Margarito's knuckles before his boxing gloves were put on prior to taking on Mosley.

That said, there's no proof, just assertions, that Margarito fought Cotto (33-1, 27 KOs) with fists of concrete during their fight. Which isn't a reach being that most people don't get caught the first time they cheat or go outside the rules. The only thing that puzzles me is if Margarito has been coming to the ring with loaded gloves, why didn't the faces of Joshua Clottey (35-2, 20 KOs) and Paul Williams bust up like Cotto's, being they both fought him in physical fights that went 12-rounds. In those fights Antonio landed plenty of hard and flush shots to the head and face. You'd think with literally hands of stone that the faces of Clottey and Williams would've been distorted after the fight? Just a thought.

Regardless of whether Margarito had an unfair advantage or not, the inescapable fact is Cotto absorbed a beating during the bout. On top of that Cotto dug down and nailed Margarito with his Sunday punch in succession consistently during the fight and Antonio not only wasn't deterred, he kept going after Miguel throwing somewhere in the vicinity of 100 punches a round. When you're a fighter like Cotto who can punch and you catch your opponent on the way in like he's a heavy bag with eyes, and he just keeps forcing it, that saps a fighter both mentally and physically almost as much as the working over he's in the process of absorbing.

Cotto did the right thing by taking on a fighter like Michael Jennings in his last fight. Stopping Jennings who had a nice record but wasn't an upper-tier fighter at the world class level basically helped to get him back to a winning mindset and possibly helped erase the memory of what

happened the last time he was under the bright lights wearing small gloves.

However, Clottey isn't a confidence builder. He's a physically strong welterweight who has never been handled in 37 fights. He's also hungry and may be getting Cotto at the right time. Once an unbeaten fighter suffers their first defeat, especially in a devastating fashion like Cotto, it doesn't take as much to convince them that they're not an indestructible machine who can't be beat the next time they're engaged in what seems at the time to be a life and death struggle.

In Cotto's favor, Clottey isn't a puncher and that'll play a major part in how he reacts and handles the sustained pressure Clottey will look to impose. However, Clottey exhibits very good basics and fundamentals and tries to push the fight from behind a high guard. Which means Cotto will probably have to attack him low and to the body with the intent being to get Clottey to lower his hands. The problem is Cotto will most likely try to box and counter Clottey which will somewhat neutralize his body attack. On top of that when Cotto attempts to go to the body he'll be open for Clottey's counters. The other possible problem Clottey may cause Cotto stylistically is the fact that his high guard will have his right hand in a natural position to block Cotto's big left-hook without even thinking about it.

Cotto had success countering Shane Mosley and fighting in retreat because Mosley let his hands go leaving him open for Miguel's counters. Mosley was looking to knock out Cotto with every combination he threw. Shane rushed his shots and fought over-aggressively. Clottey doesn't open up and look for the big shot nearly as much as Mosley, which translates into him not being as open to Cotto's counters.

Another concern I have for Cotto is the thought of Clottey having an iron chin. Clottey's ability to take a big shot pretty much insures the fight will go the entire 12-rounds. Which means Cotto has 36 minutes to not have the thought of Margarito slip back into his head. What if Cotto really whacks Clottey and he can't hurt him or slow him down? Will Clottey feed off of that and think this guy's been stopped before, so I can do it, leading him to becoming more confident as the fight progresses? And what if Cotto loses his confidence and starts questioning whether or not he can win against a guy who can stand up to his punch? This is something that no one can say how he'll react and respond to.

This is a huge fight for Cotto. A victory puts him right back in the thick of the welterweight picture along with being inserted into the Pacquiao sweepstakes or a possible fight with Floyd Mayweather Jr, maybe. Miguel must get all due praise for seeking a fight with Clottey who presents some serious style issues for him. That's why we'll find out a lot about Cotto in this fight. No doubt the book on Clottey will be more open after this fight too, but it's Cotto who enters the fight with more mental and psychological pressure on him.

Miguel Cotto is a real fighter and he's also a smart fighter. He's shown that he can adjust to the unforeseen that can happen during a fight. This is something he'll have to do in his upcoming fight with Joshua Clottey. He chose a tough opponent to test himself against and he's certainly not a given to come out on top, though he should be considered the favorite.