

## Clotey-Quintana: The Welterweights Are Back In The Day

Written by Frank Lotierzo

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According to Boxrec former IBF welterweight titleholder Joshua Clotey 35-3 (20) will take on former WBO titleholder Carlos Quintana 26-2 (20) on December 5th at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City New Jersey. Clotey-Quintana will be the semi-windup bout before the Pavlik-Williams middleweight title bout to be aired on HBO.

Clotey and Quintana, both 32, are coming off a loss in their last high profile fight. Quintana was stopped in the first round by Paul Williams in June of 2008 after winning a decision over Williams six months earlier and handing "The Punisher" the first and only set back of his career. As for Clotey, he lost a split decision to Miguel Cotto this past June at Madison Square Garden in New York in his last fight. This was a fight that appeared to be there for Clotey after 10 rounds but in what has been a pattern during his career in big fights, he stopped letting his hands go in the 11th and 12th rounds thus costing him any shot to gain the decision. That said, Clotey inflicted more punishment on Cotto than he absorbed from him despite going down in the first round.

There's no title on the line for the scheduled 10-round bout and both fighters have agreed to a contracted weight of 149, two pounds over the welterweight limit. Which isn't surprising in the least being we're experiencing a time that what fighters weigh is insignificant to some fans. Although in reality Clotey nor Quintana want to put in the work and time to shed the two extra pounds they'd be required to if the welterweight title were on the line. I guess weight does mean something and those last two pounds just don't evaporate off as easily as it has been implied by some fans and writers. More importantly it suggest a mindset and the message it sends is don't bother me with getting in great shape unless there's a title on the line. Which isn't the greatest message to send being that a title or big money fight is riding on the outcome of this one for both Clotey and Quintana.

What is great about this fight is how easy it seems to have been to put it together. With a title fight being so close in their grasp it says a lot that they were willing to step up and face each other. No doubt the loser will have to go to the back of the line and work their way back up. Then again Clotey and Quintana have exhibited throughout their careers that they're not hesitant about who they fight. Both have already fought Miguel Cotto. And in Quintana's case he not only fought him when he was near or at his best, he was willing to fight the most avoided fighter in boxing today, Paul Williams, not once but twice.

As for the fight itself Clotey-Quintana offers a familiar style contrast. Quintana is a good boxer that can fight and counter on the retreat. His first fight versus Williams was a masterpiece. He had "The Punisher " reaching and lunging all over the place. On top of that he exposed Williams and showed how he wasn't the most effective fighter around when forced to lead the entire bout, something he addressed and corrected in the rematch.

Clotey is very strong physically and likes to push the fight from behind his powerful left jab while keeping his chin down and his elbows in. He also likes to throw his left uppercut off his

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jab, something he had success doing against Cotto in his last fight. However, Cotto had moderate success countering it by coming over the top with his right hand, something that won't be as easy for the southpaw Quintana to do.

If both Clotey and Quintana show up in shape and fight with a sense of purpose that they've sometimes lacked, the fight could very well hinge on who lets their hands go with less trepidation. In the heat of battle in big fights Clotey has not always closed strongly and sometimes doesn't let his hands go and that has resulted in him losing critical rounds down the stretch and losing the fight. And Quintana showed against Cotto in 2005 he doesn't like it to the body and becomes glove-shy when pressed. Carlos doesn't really bother his opponent if they don't go hard at him, and with Clotey being the type fighter who doesn't always try to impose himself physically, it'll be interesting to see which one of them changes their role and tries to assert himself more than we're used to seeing them attempt to do.

The welterweight division has been one of the most hotly contested divisions in boxing lately. Last month Floyd Mayweather came out of retirement and showed he hasn't lost a step and is still among the top three pound-for-pound fighters in boxing. Next month Manny Pacquiao, who most boxing aficionados also consider among the top-three pound-for-pound fighters in boxing will take on WBO welterweight champ Miguel Cotto in a 145 pound catch-weight title bout. And if the purse split can be agreed upon the winner will fight Mayweather in 2010.

A month after Cotto-Pacquiao meet, Clotey and Quintana will fight an elimination bout only to be followed by Mosley-Berto a month later. Within a span of four months the top welterweights in the world, Mosley, Cotto, Mayweather, Clotey, Berto and Quintana will have participated in high profile bouts. Add to that Antonio Margarito's one year suspension will be about to expire soon and if Pacquiao can beat Cotto, he'll also be injected into the welterweight mix. Without question these are the good old days in the welterweight division.

It's the most competitive the welterweights have been since the late seventies and early eighties when the likes of Sugar Ray Leonard, Thomas Hearns, Roberto Duran, Wilfred Benitez, Carlos Palomino and Pipino Cuevas were all fighting each other. That's how it was back in the day.

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