

Agbeko Talks, Promises He'll Deliver Sweet Halloween KO

Written by Rick Folstad

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Promoter Don King referred to IBF bantamweight champ Joseph "King Kong" Agbeko as the "eighth wonder of the world," which, when properly translated, means Agbeko can fight a little.

But while King can see a tree and call it a forest, he wasn't too far off the mark with his exaggeration about Agbeko. There were a lot of fight people left "wondering" how Agbeko managed to upset Vic "Raging Bull" Darchinyan this past July in Sunrise, Florida.

Going into the fight as a 2-to-1 underdog against a guy ranked among the best pound-4-pound fighters in the world by some boxing experts, Agbeko did what he had to do to win.

In the way of upsets, it didn't score very high. It was a close fight with two of the three judges picking Agbeko by only a point. No Tyson-Douglas flashbacks, but it was still a win. A big win.

"They would have been extolling (Darchinyan's) virtues profusely had he won," said King, who always leaves you scrambling for a grammar book and a dictionary.

That win over Darchinyan is how Agbeko (27-1, 22 KOs) ended up on a conference call this week, talking about his upcoming IBF title defense against mandatory challenger Yonhny "El Colombiano" Perez (19-0, 17 KOs) on Halloween night at the Treasure Island Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.

The co-main event of the SHOWTIME telecast will be a lightweight fight between No. 1 ranked Antonio DeMarco (22-1-1, 16 KOs) of Tijuana and former WBA champion Jose Alfaró (23-4, 20 KOs) of Nicaragua.

"Yonhny is a good fighter," said Agbeko, getting things started. "But when I'm fighting a good fighter, it makes me work harder and I fight better. He's definitely going to get knocked out."

Perez answered by saying he didn't want to make any predictions of his own, but he said Agbeko could say what he wanted since he was in America, where they allow freedom of speech.

"But he shouldn't spit too much in the air because it could land on his face," Perez said.

Perez added that he'd been to Africa and most of the African fighters he knew "did a lot of talking," but weren't very good at backing it up.

"I'm different from most African fighters," Agbeko said. "I talk and I deliver."

"You're not fighting your wife," Perez said. "You're fighting a real man."

Asked why he predicted a knockout win, Agbeko made it simple. "I predict a knockout because

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I'm going to knock him out," he said. "I love to fight people who don't think anyone can beat them."

Perez responded by saying he's not new to the fight game.

"I'm an old dog," he said. "I've been in this business awhile. I'm ready for whatever he brings. I've been around the block. I'm not concerned with his predictions."

While Agbeko is coming off the big win over Darchinyan, Perez is fresh off a pretty good win himself, stopping Silence Mabuza in the 12th round of their title eliminator in May in a fight held in South Africa.

"I was thrilled I won," said Perez, who knew the fight was close going into the 12th round. "(Beating Mabuza) gave me a boost of confidence, but my confidence didn't just come from that fight. Beating Mabuza was great, but I had my confidence before I stepped into the ring."

With two sons and a wife back home in Colombia, Perez said it motivates him to be a better fighter. He thinks about his family all the time.

"The main opponent I have in the ring is myself," he said. "My wife's life and my kid's lives depend on what I do in the ring."

Those were pretty much the highlights of the conference call. Overall, it was peaceful with no shouting or name calling, both fighters taking some obligatory shots at each other, but still showing a lot of respect.

King summed it all up.

"They have the opportunity to have an opportunity in the Land of Opportunity."