

COTTO: I'm Completely Recovered From The Margarito Fight

Written by Rick Folstad

Wednesday, 04 November 2009 19:00

After so many press conferences, there's not much left to say. All the good questions have been asked and answered. And asked again and answered again.

So what else is there? It's late - just over a week until fight night - and if there's a good question out there that still needs to be asked, no one has heard it. And it might be too late for second chances.

Besides, it's not like Miguel Cotto is running for office, trying to sway undecided voters to his side just before the midnight hour. You have to figure by now, all the important questions have been asked and sides picked. Most have been asked a dozen times or more, stuff like, "How are you going to deal with Manny "PacMan" Pacquiao's speed,?" Or, "What have you been working on in the gym?" Or, "How is your weight situation?"

Good questions, but tired questions.

Cotto is not going to convince anyone to come over to his side, not now, not when it's this close to the Big Night. He must be tired of repeating himself. But that's part of the fight game and Cotto will play his role in it, quietly and politely answering even the most foolish questions, the ones that have been asked a dozen times already.

So on a conference call Thursday night, just nine days before his fight, Cotto went through the drill one more time, if not to win voters, maybe to get more pay-per-view viewers.

"I plan on going home to Puerto Rico as the winner," he said, again. "We wouldn't have taken this fight (with a 145-pound catch weight) if we didn't think I'd be at my best."

To the many Manny supporters out there, I can promise you this: Cotto is a very confident fighter. And he seems to easily ignore the wild predictions of Pacquiao's trainer, Freddie Roach, who says his fighter will win by an early knockout.. Maybe round one.

A great trainer, Freddie is a heck of a psychologist.

Asked what he thought about Freddie's prediction, Cotto didn't miss a step.

"Forget about what Freddie Roach says. He's not going to be (fighting). All he can do is train Manny the best he can. No matter what Freddie says, I have a very strong mind, but I'm not going to (play mind games) with Freddie."

Might have been fun.

The facts of the fight are this: Cotto (34-1, 27 KOs) , of Caguas, Puerto Rico, will put his WBO welterweight title on the line when he faces Pacquiao (49-3-2, 27 KOs) of the Philippines at the

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MGM Grand in Las Vegas on Nov. 14 (HBO, pay-per-view).

Cotto is expected to make \$10 million and Pacquiao will take home about \$20 million before taxes.

But the guaranteed winner in this fight is promoter Bob Arum, who handles both fighters.

“My job as a promoter is to put my fighters into those fights where they can make the most money,” he said on the conference call. “In that regard, I’ve done my job.”

In spades.

It doesn’t seem right to call this just a fight. It deserves something bigger, something better. But then you think back to other great fights - Ali and Frazier, Micky Ward and Arturo Gatti, Diego Corrales and Jose Luis Castillo - and you realize some fights don’t need any help. They don’t need nicknames, or gimmicks, though they are calling this fight, “Firepower,” which doesn’t have the same ring to it as the “Thrilla in Manila,” or the “Rumble in the Jungle.”

While Cotto is defending his WBO belt, Pacquiao is going for his seventh title. Asked what he thought about that, Cotto again didn’t hesitate.

“If he thinks he’s going to win a seventh title, he picked the wrong fighter to do it against.”

As for Pacquiao’s legendary hand speed, Cotto wasn’t giving out any secrets, but he did say “his speed is not going to be the factor everyone thinks it’s going to be.”

Asked if he’s a better fighter since his close win over Joshua Clottey in June, Cotto said he fought nine rounds with a huge gash over his eye against a worthy opponent. How can that not make you a better fighter?

“And I won,” he said. “I learned how to deal with huge problems during a fight.”

He’ll have to deal with another huge problem on the night of the 14th.

Finally, he was asked - again - if he is the same fighter today that he was before he was stopped in a brutal, controversial fight against Antonio Margarito in July 2008. It’s his only loss.

“I’m completely recovered from the Margarito fight,” he said.

He’d better be.