

Paul Williams Best Be Mindful, Kermit Cintron CAN Crack

Written by Ron Borges
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Paul Williams would be wise to learn from the lessons of the past, both his and that of the man he has long pursued, Kelly Pavlik. Beware the man you do not respect.

Tonight Williams will face an opponent it seemed he was going to face several times when both held versions of the welterweight title but those fights never happened. Since that time Kermit Cintron's career has ground slowly to a halt. He was twice knocked out by Antonio Margarito, although both those outcomes are now colored by the loaded gloves Margarito was later found to be wearing against Shane Mosley, and last year he fought to a controversial draw against Sergio Martinez that cost him the interim WBC light middleweight title and a fistic rebirth.

Now he is considered damaged goods because – despite a solid win over Alfredo Angulo a year ago - in a boxing sense he is. Yet difficult though it has been to make himself relevant again, that doesn't mean Cintron can't knock Paul Williams senseless and if Williams thinks otherwise he could find himself in the same situation Pavlik is in today.

Pavlik, of course, was beaten in his last outing by Martinez, who now holds not only the middleweight title but also an expensive rematch clause with Pavlik and the cards in the 160-pound division. As for Williams, lose to Cintron and he'll find out what it really means to be someone nobody wants to fight because now nobody will have to.

Cintron has his flaws to be sure, including a tendency to get hit way more often than is wise, but he is still a dangerous puncher who has knocked out 28 of his 32 victims in a career in which he's 32-2-1 and still more alive than Williams may think.

What is concerning about Williams (38-1, 27 KO) is twofold. First, just because he's built like Thomas Hearn doesn't mean he's Thomas Hearn...which, by the way, he is not. He is a difficult man to handle for welterweights because of his huge advantage in both size and reach but he is neither a devastating puncher nor a supremely skilled boxer. He is a little of both but not an overwhelming amount of either.

So what Williams would be wise to recall is that he was on the deck in the first round against Martinez and other than in the opinion of a half-blind judge named Pierre Benoist was in a dangerously close fight that he won by a slim majority decision.

If Cintron puts him down he is less likely to survive because he has always had a finisher's power and mindset. Landing powerful shots, even in defeat, has not been difficult for him. Withstanding them, at least when in with Margarito, has been.

"Kermit's not only the biggest puncher Paul has been in there with, but he's also a guy capable of boxing beautifully and boxing to victory which he did in what I thought was a very one-sided win over Alfredo Angulo," said Cintron's promoter, Lou DiBella.

"I think you're going to see fireworks on Saturday night on both sides. I do expect a barnburner. Truly, anyone can win this fight and that's what boxing is all about. It's about guys trying to

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entertain. Both these guys take and throw big blows. Both these guys know how to box and both these guys are warriors.

That is a fact it would be wise for Williams to remember. He is the favorite Saturday night and deservedly so. What he is not is a prohibitive favorite because while Cintron may have been twice badly hurt by Margarito, he beat Alfredo Angulo and fought evenly enough with the man who just dethroned Pavlik to be looked upon with both respect and well-deserved nervousness by Williams and his crew.

If Paul Williams doesn't understand that he may learn a lesson often absorbed the hard way in boxing – from the seat of his pants.

“(Kermit's) a big puncher and can box too,” Williams conceded this week. “I've shown that I'm a big puncher and I'm a boxer too.

“I don't have to prove anything to anyone. I don't care what people think about me as a fighter. I just have to go out and do my thing. I just have to go out and execute my game plan and my strategy because you could be looking for one thing then get another thing.

That's true in more ways than Paul Williams may know because if he sleeps on Kermit Cintron he may go to sleep himself.