

What Sort Of Fight Will The Cotto/Foreman Styles Make?

Written by Rick Folstad
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Miguel Cotto looks like a guy who could rip your liver out, stomp on it and smile. Tattooed and cut, you wouldn't mistake him for an accountant or a guy who sells shoes. You wouldn't want to cut him off in traffic or slip ahead of him in line. He's too intimidating. You might guess him for a gang member, but you wouldn't even be close. He has better things to do.

Yuri Foreman? He looks like he just finished practicing with the church choir and now he has to fill in as a volunteer down at the soup line. After that he's going to hand out blankets to the homeless. A future rabbi, he looks like a Jewish Opie Taylor 20 years later.

So how did these two guys finally come together?

Cotto (34-2, 27 KOs), a three-time world champion out of Puerto Rico, faces Foreman (28-0, 8 KOs), the undefeated WBA super-welterweight champ from Brooklyn, on June 5 at the new Yankee Stadium (HBO) in what they're calling, "Stadium Slugfest." Top Rank promoter Bob Arum said he's expecting about 30,000 ticket buyers. History is being made. And remembered.

But "Slugfest might be overkill in regards to the main event. Usually, that requires two willing participants and unless Foreman forgets what got him there, he won't be foolish enough to slug it out with a slugger.

If styles make fights, It's hard to figure out what's going to happen with this one.

Cotto has been in the ring with some of the best fighters in the world, and he's handled himself pretty well. As a fighter, he's visited places Foreman has never even dreamed of. With only eight KOs in 28 fights, Foreman isn't expected to win by knockout. I can't see him winning at all.

"(Foreman) doesn't have great punching power," said hall-of-fame trainer Emanuel Steward, who is training Cotto for the first time. "But he punches much better than his record indicates. If he can catch you coming in...

On a conference call Thursday, Steward sounded almost giddy when he talked about Cotto and how far the two have come since Steward was brought in to help.

"Everything is going way, way, way better than I ever expected, Steward said when asked about Cotto's training camp in Tampa. "It's been a phenomenal experience for me at this stage of my life to be working with a great fighter in Miguel. I've always been a big fan of his.

Steward said Cotto has sparred over 130 rounds and has been hit only about 12 times, and those punches just grazed him.

Fighting at junior-welterweight and welterweight most of his career, he's moving up to 154 pounds to fight Foreman. But according to Steward, he looks normal and healthy at 154

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pounds.

“It’s only seven pounds different,” Steward said. “I think his best weight is at 150 or at the 151 mark, so he could fight at either weight division, but that will be up to him and Bob Arum after the fight.

Steward isn’t too worried about his fighter. He’s more concerned with the awkward style Foreman brings with him. Calling Foreman a “very talented, under-appreciated fighter who has an extremely difficult style for anyone, Steward said Cotto has been looking great, but Foreman could pose some problems.

Still, Steward said he couldn’t be more pleased with how Cotto is looking. He said it was going to be difficult for anyone to stay away from him for 12 rounds because he’s looking “very fast with his feet and his combinations are wicked and his body punching is awesome.

And he’s found his balance, which has been missing for most of Cotto’s career.

“For the first two days, it was difficult for me to work with (Cotto) because his balance was so bad, and his feet were spread so far apart and his head was down so he couldn’t throw two or three-punch combinations, Steward said. “He was just throwing one single punch at a time. In a matter of two or three days, I made him drop his hands and just dance back and forth with his weight evenly balanced and he caught onto it and from that point on, he went to a whole new level.”

But Steward claims he didn’t make any major changes because Cotto had to be doing something right to get to the level he was at.

“We’re working very hard in training camp and everything is more than good, more than we expected, Cotto said about his first fight since losing to Manny Pacquiao last November. “We’re just waiting for the night of the fight. I’m more than 100 percent sure we’re going to be the WBA champion.