Written by Michael Woods
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Fight fans, some of whom may be looking to lay out a little bread on the outcome, are wondering if perhaps 35 year-old Sergio Martinez might be having weight issues as he counts down to the Nov. 20 rematch with Paul Williams.

On Oct. 22, at the mandatory 30 day weigh in, the WBC scale said the Spaniard Martinez weighed 176 pounds. The contracted weight for the bout, a defense of Martinez WBC middleweight crown, is 158 pounds or less. Williams, for the record, was 162.

Martinez, on a Wednesday conference call to hype the rematch, repeatedly dismissed the notion that he is fighting a losing battle with his body, and the scale. He did, however, hammer home the point that he thinks Williams and his team look too hard to make excuses for the tight margin of the last bout.

Paul didnt really want the fight with me, Martinez said through an interpreter, so he tried to put in a lot of conditions to make the fight. I agreed to the conditions. But weight is no problem, Ive never had a weight problem in my career.

Martinez turned pro in 1997, as a welterweight, moved to 154 around 2002, and stayed there until he jumped to middleweight to meet Williams last December. He told TSS that after training Wednesday morning, he weighed 169, and said he will have no problem hitting 158 on Nov. 19.

He tried to dispel the notion, put forth in part one of the conference call, by Williams trainer George Peterson, that he had months and months to prepare for Williams the first time, while Williams only had three weeks, after his foe Kelly Pavlik had to pull out because of a hand injury. Paul Williams is a great fighter and champion and a great talker. Hes looking for excuses. We had the same amount of time as Williams, Martinez said. Williams should do more training and less talking.

When a questioner asked if there is a contractual clause which forbids Martinez from gaining an excessive amount of weight after the weigh in, Martinez said there wasnt, but now Williams might want to add something to the contract, another excuse.

Martinez said he wants to make it an early night, in contrast to Williams, who said he expects a lengthy fight, and wants to punish Martinez.

TSS-EMs take--you cant blame Team Williams and promoter Goossen for fighting for and securing this condition. Williams is the bigger name, and holds the belt, and holds more leverage. Do I like this new movement towards catchweights, as savvier promoters and managers seek to gain every advantage they can? No. Manny Pacquaio, or should we say, Team Pacquiao is the chief proponent of this arcing trend. And he isnt truly fighting for the legit 154 pound title if he and his foe must weigh 150 pounds or less at their weigh in. He should be fighting for a Welterweight Plus title, perhaps. The point can be made, though, that Antonio

Margarito, and Martinez, can hydrate to their hearts content, so they can and will have a poundage advantage come fight night, so maybe it all evens out. But the toll of taking off another pound, or two, or more, certainly does benefit the smaller man. Anyway, if catchweights mean we have more intriguing matches, more compelling, fan friendly fights, and the cost is a meeting in the middle in the weight department, I think we can all live with this. But something tells me the pugilists of the Golden Age might be looking down at this catchweight nonsense, and busting serious chops.