

## Pascal Says Pressure Is On Hopkins, Whose Career Might Be Over With A Loss

Written by Michael Woods

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On a conference call Tuesday to hype his bout against Bernard Hopkins, which will run Dec. 18 on Showtime, Jean Pascal (26-1, his sole loss to Carl Froch, coming off career best win over Chad Dawson) said that the pressure to perform isn't on him, it will be on Hopkins. Even if I lose, I can do it again, he said, but if Hopkins loses, his career might be done. I'm going to do my best to beat the living legend, because I'm not supposed to beat the living legend.

I'd counter, actually, that he is supposed to beat the living legend. With his athleticism, and stamina, he should be able to work harder than Hopkins (51-5-1), who some think has slipped in the last year or two. But Bernard has a way of being able to set the tempo, employ the tricks of the trade which keep the fight at a pace which suits him, so fight fans are pretty well split when asked to pick a winner.

One figures that if Pascal can exert his edge in age over Hopkins on December 18, he will break the legends three fight winning streak. If Pascal, the 28-year-old WBC light heavyweight champion, can make Hopkins work harder than his soon-to-be-46 year old body wants to work, if he can get Hopkins out of his clutching, grabbing, tempo-setting comfort zone, then he will have his hand raised at the end of the night.

Pascal said he has a surprise or two or three for Hopkins, and wouldn't share his strategy for the bout, which takes place at the Pepsi Center in Quebec.

He says he called out and targeted Hopkins because he has high aspirations, and wants to be in the legend class when his career is over.

The champ, who has been training in Miami, said he likes early KOs, but he likes to fight, so more rounds doesn't bother him. He won't aim for a KO, he said.

Promoter Yvon Michel said 16,000 of the 16,495 seats available have already sold, so the joint will be hopping on fight night.

As for what might come next, he said he's not thinking of Lucian Bute, or anyone other than Hopkins. He asked Hopkins to bring his hat and gloves, so he won't catch a cold or flu, and have an excuse if he loses.