

Ward Flips A Coin, Bute, Kessler Like Froch Over Johnson

Written by The Sweet Science
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ELITE SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS ANDRE WARD, LUCIAN BUTE, MIKKEL KESSLER WEIGH IN ON FROCH-JOHNSON SEMIFINAL This Saturday, June 4, LIVE on SHOWTIME® at 9 p.m. ET/PT

NEW YORK (June 2, 2011) – Carl Froch is the heavy favorite to defeat Glen Johnson Saturday in Atlantic City live on SHOWTIME® (9 p.m. ET/PT, delayed on the West Coast), but Super Six World Boxing Classic Finalist Andre Ward believes there's a decent chance that "The Road Warrior" can upset "The Cobra" to claim the WBC Super Middleweight title and advance to the tournament Final.

"It's a 50-50 fight," Ward said. "I wouldn't be surprised if Carl Froch dominated Glen Johnson and I wouldn't be surprised if Johnson pulled the upset."

Ward (24-0, 13 KOs) will face the Froch-Johnson winner in the Final of the inaugural Super Six World Boxing Classic Cup and global recognition as the world's No. 1 168-pound fighter.

"Mentally, I'm prepared to fight either guy," Ward said. "The fans want to see Ward and Froch but it is Froch's job to take care of his business and uphold his end of the bargain and Glen Johnson will have something to say about that on June 4."

Mikkel Kessler, who defeated Froch in Group Stage 2 before withdrawing from the tournament with a serious eye injury, thinks Froch will have the upper hand in the Semifinal showdown.

"These are all difficult fights but I think Froch will win," said Kessler, who will return to the ring for the first time since April 2010 in Saturday's SHOWTIME co-feature. "It will be an awkward fight for both of them. They have different styles and different sizes, but Froch should win it."

Kessler (43-2, 32 KOs), of Denmark, will face France's Mehdi Bouadla (22-3, 10 KOs) in a same-day-delay telecast from Parken Football Stadium in Copenhagen, Denmark. Kessler, who lost the WBA title to Ward in Group Stage 1, has shown interest in challenging Froch or Ward in a rematch in the future, or squaring off with IBF Super Middleweight Champion Lucian Bute, should he emerge victorious from Saturday's comeback bout.

"I'd prefer a rematch against Froch in the future over a fight against Johnson," Kessler said. "Froch would make the best matchup for Ward. I hope that Froch will learn from Ward's previous fights. I didn't know much about Ward when I fought him – he's fast and clever. I definitely would want to see Ward vs. Froch in the Final."

Like Kessler, Bute – who will be ringside for the fight – also thinks Froch will edge out Johnson in a tough scrap.

"I think Carl Froch will beat Glen Johnson in a spectacular fight," Bute said. "Glen is a good

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fighter with a lot of experience. He'll do his best to get to the Final of the Super Six. But Froch is younger and physically stronger. He'll win by decision in a tough fight."

While Bute (28-0, 23 KOs), of Montreal, Canada, by way of Romania, hasn't fought any of the fighters in the tournament, he's eagerly awaiting his chance to face the best 168-pounders in the world.

"I want to face anybody who wants to fight me," Bute said. "I'm ready for everyone. I can't wait for my next fight in my own country of Romania in July. It's going to be an amazing experience for me and a dream come true. I will beat (Jean-Paul) Mendy. After that, I want a big fight this fall and then face the winner of the Super Six."

Bute will defend his IBF title against Mendy (29-0-1, 26 KOs) on July 9 in Bucharest, Romania. Highlights from the fight will be televised on the July 9 SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING doubleheader. Brando Rios will defend his WBA Lightweight Championship for the first time against Urbano Antillon in the main event while Kermit Cintron will square off with Carlos Molina in the co-feature.

While Bute thinks Froch will defeat Johnson, he asserts "The Road Warrior" would be a tougher opponent for Ward in the Final.

"In my opinion, Carl Froch and Glen Johnson could be a good match up for Andre Ward," Bute said. "Froch-Ward would be more a strategic fight; Froch has a good jab and he moves well in the ring.

"But Johnson-Ward would be more spectacular. Johnson is an aggressive fighter and he would constantly pressure Andre Ward. With either matchup it's really a win-win situation."

Froch-Johnson is promoted by DiBella Entertainment, Warriors Boxing and Carl Froch.

Ward (24-0, 13 KOs), of Oakland, Calif., will sit ringside with **SHOWTIMECHAMPIONSHIP**
BOXING announcers

Gus Johnson

,
Al Bernstein

and

Antonio Tarver

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