

Written by Frank Lotierzo

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He's baack!

That's right, Bernard Hopkins, who must be considered the top light heavyweight in the world at this time, will meet Chad Dawson, who used to be considered the top of the light heavyweight food chain not so long ago, this Saturday night.

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Hopkins, 46, isn't even the fighter he was when he was 40, but he's still the consummate ring technician and mauler. He's built quite a legacy and he's now at the point where nothing he does will take away from it....and with each victory he adds notches to it.

Remember when he promised his late mother that he wouldn't fight past 40? If she were around today she might be chewing him out for breaking his promise and continuing to fight, but you know deep down inside she'd be smiling as she was doing it after all that he's accomplished.

Amazingly after 20 plus years as a professional fighter, Bernard Hopkins has never taken a beating or left the ring where he looked like a beaten fighter. Not once. And once again as the fight with Dawson 30-1 (17) approaches, we have to forge an opinion as to how Hopkins 52-5-2 (32) will fare against his 29 year old challenger.

Does one really have to at this stage go into everything Hopkins brings to the ring as a fighter? How about if we just state that he can do everything, he's super tough mentally and physically, and he's not above going outside the Marquis of Queensberry rules if he has to in order to get into his opponent's mind and gain a psychological or strategical advantage and I think Dawson may be vulnerable to this as much as any fighter Bernard has crossed paths with recently once the bout starts. And that's the last thing Dawson can allow Hopkins to do to him or every physical advantage he holds over him will go for naught. □□ As to those advantages, height, reach, hand speed and youth, which would make Dawson the favorite any other time if Hopkins weren't the opponent. However, Hopkins is the opponent and he's as good as any fighter you'll ever see at stripping his opponents of their bullets and forcing them to fight uphill. And as we've seen in past bouts that has taken a toll on them and the more desperate they get, the stronger and more confident he emerges as the fight progresses. But, Dawson will have one thing going for him that past light heavyweight foes Antonio Tarver and Jean Pascal didn't have going for them...that being Dawson won't be trying to kill Bernard or take his head off from bell-to-bell for 12 rounds. This was something both Tarver and Pascal set out to do and by the mid point of the fight they were as close to hurting Hopkins as they would've been had they been punching at a bed sheet hanging over a clothes line.

The one mistake Dawson won't make against Hopkins is he won't be fooled into believing he can stop Hopkins or knock him out. I'm sure his trainer, former super-middleweight contender John Scully, is plenty shrewd enough to not let Chad get sucked into thinking he can impose himself physically over Hopkins. Dawson is a natural boxer, he's no puncher and to compound that, Hopkins has a cast-iron chin and will. So any thought by Dawson that he'll be the first to

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stop Hopkins or go through him is a waste of time. Luckily for Chad, that's not who he is and I doubt even the crafty Hopkins can take him out of his game to the point where he fights out of character. If the mystique of Hopkins wasn't so legendary, Dawson is a fighter that a plausible case could be made on his behalf that he can win.

As most know by now the older Hopkins is most susceptible to fighters with quick hands who can get off and then step away or to the side, thus nullifying a Hopkins counter. If Dawson just pecks away at Hopkins with his long quick jab, Bernard will either try and time his own jab in between Chad's anticipated incoming shots, or he'll try to push the fight and look to get Dawson to fight him off instead of boxing him. And that's why if Dawson can implement his jab and make it the dominant punch of the fight without being drawn into a street fight, he can give Bernard all kinds of trouble. Which is much easier said than done. When all is said and done, Dawson must out hustle Bernard without trying to put any hurt on him. He must touch him and score with his quick hands thrown in multiples - and then give him another look.

Nobody, with the exception of Jermaine Taylor has forced Hopkins to fight from behind in the last decade or more. Even Joe Calzaghe carried the fight to Hopkins and after he got off and scored, waited for a receipt from Bernard, which enabled Hopkins to stay in the fight and that's why it was so close. It's not that Hopkins can't push the fight and be effective as the aggressor, it's just that it's not him at his best. Remember, just three fights ago how un-Hopkins-like he looked chasing Roy Jones all over the ring?

When this fight was first talked about two or so years ago, I favored Dawson and even believed that Hopkins would stay away from Chad because he understood how Dawson's style could trouble him. But things have changed since then and Dawson was soundly beaten by Jean Pascal and despite beating Adrian Diaconu in his last fight, I'm not convinced he's all the way back to where he was from a confidence vantage point before he fought Pascal. And Hopkins is the last fighter in boxing you want in front of you if you're second guessing yourself in the least. It's tempting to sit back and deduce that Hopkins is going to fight like a fighter closer to 50 than one in his early thirties one of these nights, and Dawson does have a style that could trouble him, therefore I'll look smart and go with Dawson. But I just can't. I'd rather pick Hopkins and be wrong than the opposite.

In addition to that, it's hard to envision Hopkins losing to a fighter who fights so complacently and may not embody all the confidence in the world once the fight becomes ugly and rough.

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Hopkins wins an ugly lackluster decision. The bigger shock to me will be if Hopkins-Dawson turns out to be half the fight that Hopkins-Pascal II was.

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Radam G says:

Dawson has the style against certain types of fighters, but does he have the style for beating Old B-Hoppy? Hum! We will see. But Bad Chad Dawson will see that all his talent, skills and speed mean nothing, if he cannot execute against the sneaky Executioner. All Night LONNGGGGG BCD will be deep kim chee. Old B-Hoppy is going to whack him upside the head, smile and get the edge. BCD is going to feel like a ship dead in the sea. Abandoning ship, he won't be able to do in that squared jungle. He's going to have to take an arse whuppin' like a man. Some jokers and dey sistas must be crazy if they think that BCD is going to run over Old B-Hoppy.

I'm reminded of da "Old Mongoose" -- Archie Moore -- at 46 years old and counting. I saw him on film whuppin' many of young arses back in the 1950s before most of us were breathing. Forty-six years old in 2011 is the new 26 years old compared to the 1950s when 40 something was old for boxing and everything else. Da great and powerful Genie Naazim got Old B-Hoppy sippin' on B-side whup-a\$\$ juice and Fountain of Youth gin. And dat sucka can easily win. Don't be surprised if he does. Holla!

amayseng says:

Bhop may be older and slower than a few years ago, obviously, however he remains sharp and very disciplined with his strategy.

I think pascal is faster and stronger than chad so adjusting to speed shouldn't be a problem altho adjusting to the reach height and combos will be bhops challenge.

Over all hops is just too smart and savy for the recent bad chad Dawson that we saw.

Unless he is mentally rejuvenated and different then he gets a boxing lesson.

Dawson Has The Style, But Dare You Pick Against Hopkins? LOTIERZO..Plus, Both Make Weight..Dawson

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Bhop kills a fighters confidence. Chad seems to be mentally asleep in there at times.