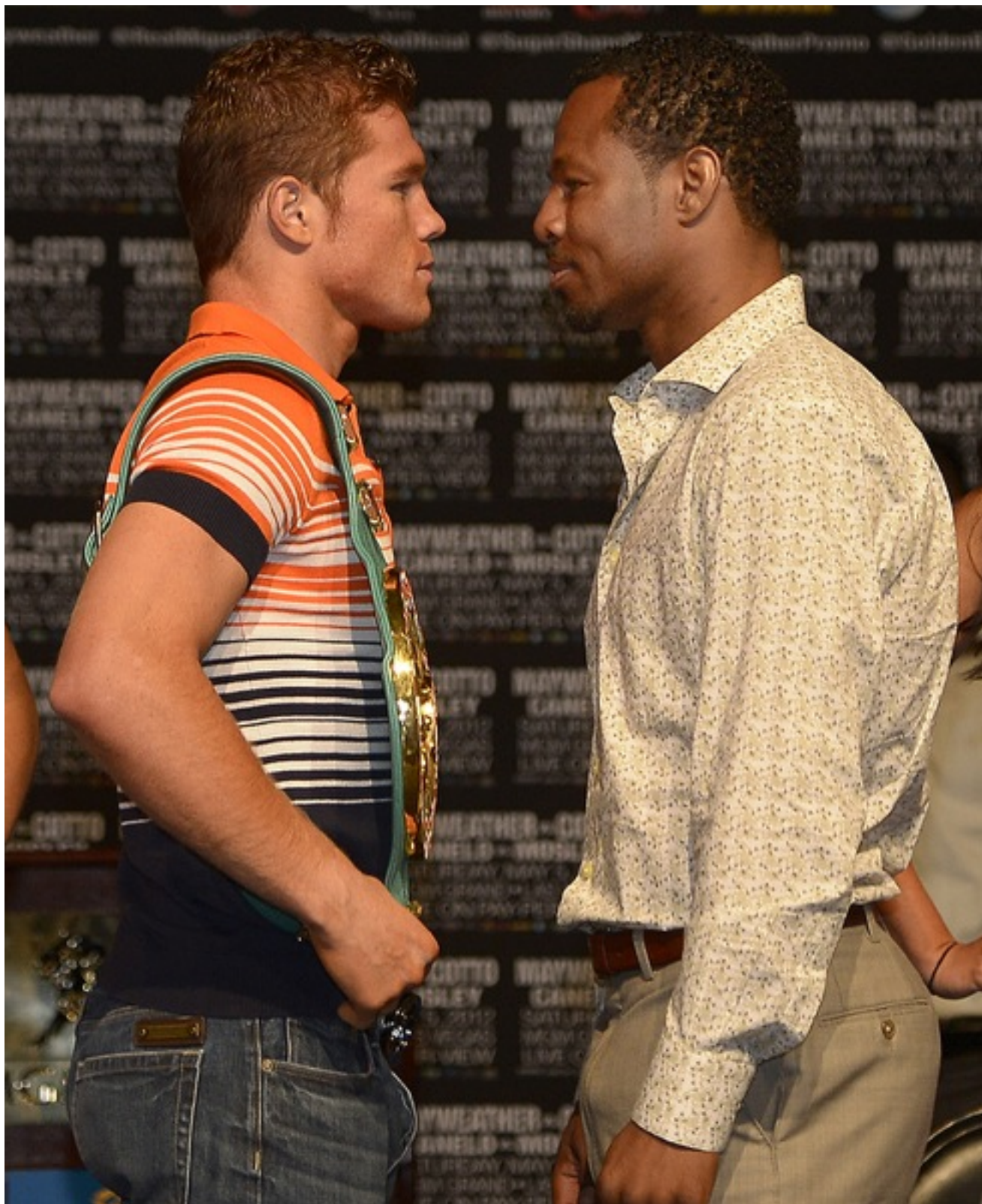


THE BREAKDOWN: Saul Alvarez-Shane Mosley

Written by Lee Wylie

Thursday, 03 May 2012 20:14



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Saul Alvarez-Shane Mosley:

**at the MGM Grand, Las Vegas, on HBO PPV
12 rounds, for Alvarez's WBC junior middleweight title**

No matter how you slice it, things do not look promising for Shane Mosley as he heads into his bout with Saul 'Canelo' Alvarez. At nearly 41 years-old, Mosley 46-7-1-1 {39 kos} has shown severe signs of decline lately. Each of Mosley's seven career losses have taken place within his last seventeen fights - three of those losses, along with one draw, have occurred during in his last six bouts. Mosley's last win -a stunning knockout of Antonio Margarito back in 2009 - was the last time Mosley resembled anything close to his former great self. The sweetest days of Sugar Shane 'appear to be long gone.

Saul Alvarez 39-0-1 {29 kos} on the other hand,seems to be entering his prime. At 21 years-old, Alvarez is one of boxing's brightest stars.His popularity among his countrymen,along with his no nonsense style of fighting - not to mention his unusual look for a Mexican - have made him a marketing dream. So as the remaining breed of boxing superstars begin to die out, it would seem that Alvarez is in the right place at the right time, especially as a potential fight with Floyd Mayweather could be on the horizon. But first, Saul Alvarez must take care of his opponent at hand, future hall of famer, Shane Mosley.

It's alot easier to talk about Mosley's past, rather than his current state. There was a time when Mosley was considered - along with Roy Jones and Felix Trinidad - to be the very best fighter, pound for pound, in boxing.During his lightweight prime, Mosley was a rare mix of speed, power and aggression. His speedy combinations, heavy hands and ferocious body punching made him arguably the most dominant lightweight since Pernell Whitaker. This however, is not the fighter who will be facing Saul Alvarez. These days, Mosley is not the chilling finisher he used to be, nor is he as fast - time has not been as kind to him as it has to Bernard Hopkins. (Side note: Look at the older fighters who have prospered.George Foreman, Archie Moore, Evander Holyfield, Bernard Hopkins, Roberto Duran and Juan Manuel Marquez.....The commonality among them is relaxation. Mosley is the polar opposite. Even in his prime he was all jittery and herky jerky, never the most relaxed of fighters. Watch tomorrow after Alvarez nails him with a jab. You will see what I mean. What did Mosley say after the Mayweather fight? I was all wound up and tight. Merchant asked him why, with all his experience. Truth is, Mosley has always been like this, it's just he's now at an age where it shows up more. Too much nervous energy for an aging fighter.) Shane Mosley has now suffered three consecutive lackluster performances. Ok, so two of them were against the best fighters in the world, but they were eye openers.

Last time out against Manny Pacquiao {almost a year to the day on Saturday night} Mosley fought to survive in a fight that, quite frankly, he could have won. After the Mayweather fight,many thought Shane was done.I thought that Mosley had just simply lost to a slicker, better

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technician - something Mosley has always struggled with. Yes, his speed and reflexes had eroded a bit, but nobody could dispute his punching power remained - his right hand reduced Mayweather's legs to doing the funky chicken in round two. Not long after, against Sergio Mora, Mosley looked even worse against a far less formidable opponent. After the fight, while I thought Mosley had slipped even more, I still did not think that he was finished as a fighter, even though what I witnessed suggested otherwise. Yet again, I put Mosley's poor showing down to another bad style match up - Mora is an underrated defensive fighter, who fits perfectly into the same unaccommodating style bracket as Vernon Forrest, Winky Wright and Floyd Mayweather.

Admittedly, upon hearing the news that Mosley had signed to fight Manny Pacquiao, I thought Shane Mosley had been given a tremendous opportunity to redeem himself against a fighter who would accommodate a faded Shane Mosley's style.

Mosley, despite the 'Sugar' moniker, has never been anything like what the pseudonym suggests. Mosley has never really been a boxer. He has never really possessed a good jab, he has never really utilized much head movement and he has never really boxed well on his toes or moving. I've always felt that Mosley performed well as a slugger - toe to toe, there was not much better than Sugar Shane. I believed that Pacquiao's southpaw aggression and defensive lapses would play straight into Mosley's power slugging style, and in particular, his left hook - I consider the left hook to be just as effective against a southpaw as a straight right hand. As Mosley was the owner of one of the best left hooks in boxing, I thought that if there were to be any signs of a gun slinging contest between the two, with his great chin and durability, Mosley may have been the last man standing and pulled off the upset. How wrong I was.

Rather than fight to his strengths - hard power punching against a fighter who was right in front of him - Mosley and Nazim Richardson decided to counterpunch. From the moment Mosley's tactics became apparent, I knew I had got it wrong. Not only about the nature of the fight, but also about Mosley's future as a relevant fighter. The fact that Shane Mosley opted to fight a defensive fight against a fighter who obliged his A game told me everything I needed to know about Mosley's current status - Richardson and Mosley knew that Shane is no longer capable of fighting in his most productive manner. Afterwards, many pointed to Marquez' counterpunching blueprint as the tactics that Mosley employed. I agree, Mosley did negate a lot of Pacquiao's attacks, but he did so by disengaging. The fact that Mosley didn't throw one left hook, his signature punch and best chance of winning the fight proved that Mosley can no longer pull the trigger. This is why I give Mosley no chance against Saul Alvarez.

If this was the Shane Mosley who nearly decapitated Antonio Margarito, I would have given him a great chance against a fighter who will not be moving laterally a great deal, and who does not move his head an awful lot. Mosley's direct aggression and power could have proven to be too much for the untested young Mexican. However, the 2012 version of Mosley, could in fact prove to be the perfect 'look good' opponent for Alvarez, so much so, that I believe that Mosley will be lucky to see the final bell.

Shane Mosley will be facing the hardest hitter he has ever faced on Saturday night, at a time when his reflexes appear to be at an all time low. Alvarez's left hook, thrown to head and body, are very nasty to say the least. At lightweight, Shane Mosley often enjoyed a physical

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advantage over his opponents, particularly his reach. At junior middleweight, Mosley is on the small side, whereas Alvarez is huge for the division - his strength could be his greatest asset. Alvarez's hands are also alot quicker than he is given credit for.

Throughout his career, Mosley has always struggled against fighters with a good jab. While it is not a cobra-like jab like that of Larry Holmes, Alvarez is the owner of a ram rod - a Sonny Liston of a jab -that is not only used to control the distance and tempo of his fights, but to inflict damage upon his opponents also. Although Alvarez is more of an accumulative puncher, he is starting to show inclinations of a knockout artist. There is no doubt that Alvarez is one of the hardest punchers in boxing - his devastating knockout of the normally durable Carlos Baldomir speaks volumes about his punching prowess. More worryingly for Mosley may be Alvarez's gradual defensive improvements. Alvarez now employs decent head movement along with underrated defense, which makes him a far more elusive target than looks suggest.

If I was forced to make a case for Mosley, I would point to the opposition of both fighters. Mosley has fought a who's who of modern greats throughout his career, while thus far, Alvarez has been facing a who's that?quality of opponent. Also, any fight fan will tell you that the last thing to go in an aging fighter is his power, should he possess any. So if Alvarez becomes careless in there, Mosley might be able to land something worthwhile and make an interesting night of it. That is what I would like, not what I expect.

What I expect is that Saul Alvarez is going to surprise a few people and outbox Shane Mosley behind his jab. I have a feeling Alvarez will show a lot of early respect for Mosley, who's experience in big fight situations cannot be ignored. However, Alvarez will soon realize that Mosley has nothing left in the tank but heart and reputation and I think by the middle sessions, Mosley will be in the same state of mind that he was in against Pacquiao - his physical erosion and diminished punch resiliency lead him to believe that Pacquiao was the hardest hitter he had ever faced - and will be in full on survival mode. The problem here though, is that Alvarez, while he may look like a plodder, is extremely adept at cutting the ring off. I'm not sure that Mosley will be able to avoid heavy fire the way he managed against the more forgiving Manny Pacquiao, as Alvarez looks to take out an opponent once he has them hurt. I don't think Mosley will be seeing stars on Saturday, but I do think Alvarez' size and intent will encourage Nazim Richardson to do something he threatened to do against Mayweather, and that is throw in the towel.

That's the way it is now; taking advantage of a great name when the body that owns that name is no longer capable of doing great things. This has become almost a ritual in boxing.

Prediction: Saul Alvarez by technical knockout by around the 8th round.

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Buzz Murdock says:

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I've had a long day, but your article was excellent and held my interest. I guess mosely lost alot of his cash flow when he got divorced, but even his speech is a little off, which you were kind enough not to mention. An excellent sportsman, but a little used up by balco, and a long career...Your analogy makes sense, but i'm still interested, being a big fan...kinda like a car wreck, you can't turn away from.

amayseng says:

to me this is the most intriguing fight of the night. we know floyd hand picked a war torn debilitated cotto who has no chance. with shane we dont know what he has left, yes he got out classed by floyd and pac but those are the two best boxers on the planet the last ten years.

canelo is a beast, but he did get out boxed 3/6 rounds by alfonso gomez before overwhelming him to a stop, an early stop at that.

if shane can learn to fight in spurts like bernard and conserve energy while controlling the distance and fight he may have a good chance.

shane needs to go to the body and lay traps like he did against margacheato changing his speed and power.

i think shane will have a good showing even if he does lose a decision.

ultimoshogun says:

I can see Canelo stopping Shane...if Canelo makes it through the first half without getting rocked, his chances increase. I'm expecting Canelo to rip hooks to Shanes body throughout the fight to break him down. If he does stop Shane I think its more likely to happen later in the fight around the 10 or 11th.

amayseng says:

if pac cant stop shane then canelo wont....pac is far superior to canelo, even pacs foot speed is out of this world and he couldnt get to shane