

Hunter OK With Froch Rematch, Likes A Ward-Bute Fight More

Written by Raymond Markarian
Friday, 25 May 2012 09:44



Last December, Andre Ward capped a stellar year of 2011 by beating Carl Froch and capturing the Super Six World Boxing Classic championship trophy. It became even more remarkable after the Froch fight when Ward revealed a broken left hand that he used to blister the Englishman at will. The injury sidelined the undefeated Oakland native and he has since recovered.

Meanwhile Carl Froch is facing the undefeated Lucian Bute on Saturday and stated through the media that he was gaining momentum against Ward in the later rounds of the one-sided fight.

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Ward's trainer Virgil Hunter took time to respond to Froch's assertion. Hunter says Ward fought through injury to outclass Froch, and feels Froch is diminishing Ward's accomplishment.

The 2011 BWAA Trainer of the Year tells TSS no one has been the same after fighting the undefeated Ward. And, after winning the Super Six World, Ward cleaned out the 168-pound division.

Now all signs point to a Ward/Dawson clash on September 8. Dawson is moving down from to 175 to 168 for the challenge. Hunter claims that Dawson is not the only one cutting weight to get to the 168 pound super middleweight limit because Ward considered a move to light heavyweight before Dawson called his name after the Hopkins fight in April.

I asked Hunter on Thursday morning to give us his take on the Dawson fight. The trainer also discusses the apparent delusion of Carl Froch, and tells us about why Dawson's flaws don't matter.

RM: Carl Froch has talked a lot about his loss to Andre Ward during the build up to his bout with Lucian Bute this Saturday. Froch gives credit to Andre for the victory but says he can do better the second time. Do you think that Carl Froch is dismissing his loss against Andre Ward?

VH: Look, he is in total denial. He is having a hard time dealing with what happened to him. I don't know if he will ever get over that loss. He tries to downplay it, saying he had a bad night. Actually, if anybody had a bad night, we did. We went into the fight with a broken hand in two places. The left hand, our lead hand, was handicapped so I think we had a bad night. And I think he knows that.

RM: Froch said he came on strong in the later rounds.

VH: Well, as far as him coming on strong, he was never in that fight. I told him what was going to happen on Fight Camp 360. I told him he was going to get hit a lot and he was going to miss

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a lot. And he was going to get hurt. So I think this fight with Bute is going to be tough. I don't know if he has full confidence.

RM: Why?

VH: Because he never expected to get handled so easily. He just never imagined that could happen to him, particularly with a guy that had a broken hand doing it to him. So he has his work cut out for him with Lucian Bute. I think he has a confidence problem. He is constantly parroting what he is going to do to Bute. Constantly parroting that fact. So we will see how it turns out.

RM: I know that you always tell fighters not to give any excuses. You told Froch to do that too right?

VH: Yeah, well, I mean, we made a pact that there will be no excuses from either side win or lose. But when you tell that to Carl Froch, you might as well be talking to a brick wall. He is trying to find a way to justify what happened to him. But when he is alone he will have to deal with the truth.

RM: Yeah, do you think that he is proud of his performance because he did come on towards the end of the fight?

VH: Well here is the deal. When you say come on—it means come forward. We allowed him to come forward because we were fighting with a broken hand. Andre felt excruciating pain with every punch because the pain is shooting up the arm. And it compromises the other hand because you are bracing yourself for a wince. When you lead with the broken hand, you are bracing yourself for a sharp pain to come up. So the plan over the last couple rounds was to let him walk into pot shots, which is what he did the rest of the way. So, Froch perceives it as coming on. We just changed up the tactics in order to protect the hand.

RM: Yeah.

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VH: If you look at the last couple of rounds Froch was getting hit with clean shots. And as you can see, when we took the hand wraps off, Andre's broken hand was twice as big as the other one. So you can imagine the pain. If you want to talk about toughness, there is toughness for you right there.

RM: How long did it take for Andre to recover from the hand injury?

VH: Well, he is just now recovering. You are talking about a hand that was broken in two places. And it is not like it was broken in the fight and he only had to deal with it for 45 minutes. It was broken three weeks before the fight. So, we took a little more time to make sure it healed properly.

RM: How do you see the Froch and Bute fight playing out?

VH: Well, I'd like to see Bute win so we can get that fight. I think the public wants to see a Ward/Bute fight. And I am not embarrassed to say that I am pulling for Bute. But I think Carl Froch will give him a tough fight. I wouldn't be surprised if he wins. Hopefully, if Froch wins, he will be a standup guy and try to get revenge for a loss he says was a "bad night." He says he had a bad night against us. And we would like to give him the opportunity to straighten it out.

RM: So, Andre will fight Froch again?

VH: Well, this is just me speaking. Anytime someone says they had a bad night and the outcome would be different if we fought again, I am the type of person that would oblige you. And Andre is type that will oblige you also. I think if Carl Froch is adamant about a rematch it can definitely be made.

RM: What did you think of the Mikkell Kessler vs. Allan Green fight last Saturday?

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VH: I didn't see the fight but I am not surprised of the outcome. Allan Green was not the same after he fought Andre. That fight crushed his confidence. I think that Glen Johnson and Mikkel Kessler benefitted from the fact that we took the veil off of Allan Green's bravado so to speak and left him pretty much naked. But at the same time, I don't want to take anything away from him as a fighter. Green had a great opportunity to win. But he let Kessler hang around and Kessler caught up to him.

RM: What are your thoughts on the Andre Ward/Chad Dawson fight that is coming up on September 8th?

VH: It is going to be an interesting fight. I think we match up extremely well with Chad Dawson, much better than people realize. It is going to be a good fight. We have a lot of respect for Chad Dawson and his brain trust. And we are glad the fight was made.

RM: Do you see any flaws in Dawson's game that Ward can capitalize on?

VH: Well, I don't look at the flaws in a fighter. I look at their strengths. Because the flaws can be corrected, the strengths usually stick around. I don't pay attention to what somebody would perceive to be a flaw in a fighter. We can sit and analyze a guy, and find a flaw a minute. But it really doesn't mean anything. I don't look at the weaknesses in a fighter. I look at their strengths. Their strength will be on display in the fight. Only the true weakness will show after you handcuff the strength. So, that is what I pay attention to. Not the so-called weaknesses that I conjure up in my own mind.

RM: So the idea is to stop their strengths, not capitalize on their weaknesses.

VH: Well, what are your strengths? I don't know. If you have a strong right hand, I don't know what your weaknesses are until I handcuff your right hand.

RM: Right.

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VH: One of the benefits I learned in amateur coaching is that you are fighting guys with little preparation. You don't have time to prepare a fighter by watching tape, or an eight-week training camp, you have to fight the best in the country on a fly. You have to be able to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses on the fly. So there are weaknesses, they will show during the fight. The weakness for one guy will be strength for another.

RM: OK Virgil, I will let you go. The BWAA Awards Dinner is on June 6th in New York. You will be recognized as the 2011 Trainer of the Year. Do you want to give your thoughts?

VH: First and foremost, I plan to be there. I have an opportunity to thank everyone who considered me for this award. I am humbled and flattered more than anything. I will try to uphold it with dignity and shoot for another one. Why not?

RM: OK, thanks Virgil. Catch you next time.

You can follow Ray on Twitter @RayMarkarian

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deepwater says:

ward should stay at 168 and forget bad chad at a catch weight. ward has balls, a rematch with froch in england after froch kos bute would make ward a p4p superstar. please do not be like roy jones and fight mailman ward.

amayseng says:

deepwater how on earth is froch gonna ko ward?

you are as delusional as froch

deepwater says:

[QUOTE=amayseng;16613]deepwater how on earth is froch gonna ko bute?

you are as delusional as froch[/QUOTE] froch has more power and skill then the mexican that

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