

Adrien Broner Is On The Top of My "Ones To Watch" List

Written by Michael Woods
Thursday, 19 July 2012 10:38



I cannot think of a decent reason why a professional comes in 3 1/2 pounds over the weight limit, as Broner did at the Friday weigh in. This is a stain on his rep, and casts some doubt on his professionalism, and his judgement.

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There's lots to like about Adrien Broner, the flashy-fisted junior lightweight who many sagacious judges of talent believe is one of the top few possibilities to help boxing transition when the top two pugilists of this age, Floyd Mayweather and Manny Pacquiao, exit active competition.

So, what about it, Larry Merchant? Is "The Problem" all that? Is the 22 year-old WBO junior feather champ who meets Vicente Escobedo, a 30 year-old California-based boxer with a 26-3 (15 KOs) record on Saturday in Cincinnati, a future superstar?

"It looks like he's got everything going for him," the HBO analyst told me. "We'll see what happens when he has to deal with adversity. Has he faced opposition that could bring it out in him? We will find out when we find out."

My guess is that Escobedo won't be the man to accomplish this task; he is a capable boxer who has been skillfully managed to get where he is, and is coming off a UD10 win over Juan Ruiz, who came in on a 1-7 slide. Escobedo has lost his step up fights, against Michael Katsidis (SD12) in 2009 and Robert Guerrero (UD10) in 2010, and in my mind, he will do well to make the Bronerfight semi-competitive, and not get stopped. No, I don't see him following in the Bigfoot footprints of Josesito Lopez and Danny Garcia...but as a lover of underdog specials, I'd be happy to see him do so.

Merchant thinks Broner is capable of being a standout at 135 and 140 pounds, quite possibly, and terms him a "resourceful" boxer who might just be too good for the division he campaigns in. 135 and 140, Merchant said, is "where the action is." With the sport being in the state it is in, with so many belts being wrapped around so many waists, Merchant said that Broner, even though he has a title, is what he thinks of as a "contender" at this juncture, but again, he allows that he might be the best 130 pounder on the planet. The HBO analyst said he is curious if Broner has the stuff to get the win Saturday, and then move up to 135 and secure a stepup fight, and blow us away. "In the boxing world, he is considered a potential next big thing," he said.

Some fight fans, particularly those who like their pugilists in the old school mode in terms of their personality, who like their faves to do their talking with their fists in the ring, and refrain from building their brand with trash-talking and braggadocio, haven't taken to Broner. The guy had a thousand people hop on his Hater bus when we saw him say on the "2 Days: Broner" HBO mini-doc, "I think I'm the missing puzzle piece to boxing" and, "As long as I'm focused I can do whatever I want, the world will be mine," and rapping on his way to the ring before his

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last fight, against Eloy Perez.

Is his personality particularly well-suited to stardom now, in the context of how Floyd Mayweather has built his brand and fanbase with occasionally incendiary statements, which are red meat in the Twitter age for writers focused on hits more than anything else?

"I think he's a pleasing kid who is trying to be colorful out there, and I think that's a good thing," Merchant said. "I don't think he can force himself into black hat or bad guy role (a la Mayweather). He's a likable kid, he's provocative but as I've seen it, he does it with kind of a wink in his eye when he does it.

"The kid can make himself a star, we can't make him a star," Merchant said, in summation. "Broner is a helluva good prospect, a good young fighter right now, who has the potential to be a next generation star."

Me, I tend to agree with Broner himself, who termed himself "elite," right now, on the "2 Days." You just don't see guys who can discombobulate capable pros like Perez, with a lead right hand, come along every day, or even every year. Is he, as mentor Barry Hunter says, a talent along the lines of Floyd Mayweather, Roy Jones and Ray Leonard? I am not prepared to make that leap before seeing Broner get in there with fighters two steps up from the Perez' of the world. But I do not dismiss that possibility. He is at the top of my list of ones to watch.

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brownsugar says:

I like Broners' youth and enthusiasm. Which some label as disrespectfulness. Dance dance dance round your fallen foe... and rap till your throat get sore....he reminds me of what being young and invincible felt like.

Although I need to see more before bestowing him the title of Mr HBO.

That match with Ponce delLeone was not the performance of a future p4p guy...let's see if he can maximize his potential now.

deepwater says:

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he sure does know that a closed mouth dont get fed. I am not a fan yet but lets see down the road, broner has nice skills

DaveB says:

I agree with you guys. Too early to tell but, as of now, I like what I see. I have to see him in there with some tough talent. It is too easy to bestow these young guys as world beaters and then see them get blasted out in their first real adversity or see them not do well against a style that tests them. But then again I wouldn't have given Sugar Leonard or Ali ATG status at this juncture. Let's wait and see overall what he can show me. So far he has shownme excitement.