

Third Time a Charm : Huck - Afolabi Final Odds From Berlin

Written by Phil Woolever
Friday, 07 June 2013 08:47



Marco Huck is not the best boxer or strongest puncher to campaign primarily in Germany but he is probably, and quite consistently, the most exciting.

Ola Afolabi is not the most exciting, or consistent boxer to ply his trade in the region, but he is probably one of the most technically sound practitioners around the 190 pound ranks.

Together, their rough and rumbling styles made for a pair of the best bouts anywhere, twice before. Huck won a close unanimous decision in December 2009 and they fought to a majority draw in May 2012. Both contests were controversial, and the controversy has not subsided.

Saturday night in Berlin, they will slug it out in a tiebreaker for Huck's WBO cruiserweight belt that may become Armageddon for the loser.

The contest may even prove anti-climactic, if there are anything less than maximum fireworks for all 12 rounds. That latter scenario is not as probable as the former.

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"Before the other fights, I was either physically or mentally not ready," said Afolabi, blaming his diet and less than adequate preparation. "I was still a raw product. This time I am a full fighter."

"He does not know that he can beat me, because he has never done it," said a calmly confident Huck. "I know that I can beat him."

The 28 year old Huck, 35-2-1 (25) is a wild brawler, almost as probable to have a point deducted as he is to score a knockdown. Having both those things occur during a Huck fight is not unlikely at all.

Afolabi, 31, 19-2-4 (9) on the other gloved hand, may be too composed for his own good when it comes to facing Huck. Perhaps his smoothly composed style looks less actively effective to some judges than Huck's intense, sometimes sloppy charges.

Huck is not so much a take two to land one type fighter as a fighter who will leave himself open a lot to get an opponent to leave themselves open a little. Give Huck an inch and he will take a mauling mile.

Against each other, neither man has given an inch.

Odds:

Afolabi by Decision : even

Afolabi by KO : even

Huck by Decision: 2 - 1

Huck by KO: 2 - 1

Draw : 2 - 1

Another Rematch : 15 - 1

Huck to fight unification with Joan Pablo Hernandez : 3 - 1 (both promoted by Sauerland Event)

Afolabi to fight unification with Joan Pablo Hernandez : 10 - 1 (Afolabi promoted by K2)

Huck to fight a Klitschko :3 - 1

Afolabi to fight a Klitschko (beyond sparring) : 100 - 1

I see two undeciphered clues.

The first comes from the undercard of Wladimir Klitschko - David Haye a couple summers back. Afolabi, not known as a puncher, blasted out Terry Dunstan, 24-3, with one awesome shot. This may have been a case of excellent matchmaking or of a sitting duck, but it was the kind of potential power you don't forget seeing unleashed. If Afolabi lands a good shot underneath that opens Huck up for an overhand right or hook from either side, we'll see a smashing surprise. Since Huck is known for his rare durability, it's a pretty big if.

The other clue comes from former WBA titlist Firat Arslan, who lost a highly criticized decision to Huck in November. Either way, it was the kind of gauntlet that can either galvanize or damage a fighter. The effect on Huck will not be known until the bell rings and he's taken a few shots, but those type tests are seldom beneficial, and only to the sturdiest of boxers. Huck is pretty darn sturdy.

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No matter what may happen on Saturday night, Huck probably secured at least a couple decent paydays in the heavyweight division with his strong showing against Povetkin in February 2012. Many felt Huck won the fight, and whether or not the scorecards were the most accurate indication of what went down, Huck proved he was a reasonable candidate to fight a Klitschko. The risk-reward factor should be a very substantial lure, if Huck doesn't price himself out.

If Afolabi wins, he will not find the same wide range of options as Huck, whose style has made him very popular in Germany. Afolabi's best marketing tactic would be to stop Huck so dramatically Afolabi could not be ignored. Despite Huck's popularity, if Afolabi (who has appeared in Germany numerous times) creamed him, Afolabi would inherit many of Huck's fans. Either way, Afolabi's current livelihood remains stronger for him in Europe than closer to home in LA.

"The last time, I made a mistake and let him back in the fight," reflected Afolabi. "I was a raw product. Now I am a full fighter. This time I will knock him out."

"He can say or do what he wants and try to rattle my cage so I make a mistake," said a calmly confident Huck. "I hope he understands the message from my hard punches (at the public workout). He will get my answer from my combinations in the ring."

Like the pair of gems they've already fought against each other, the fighters' countdown bravado should be appreciated. Still, one must consider that each man, all too well, probably has painful recollections about the grueling waltzes they've already put each other through before.

Thus, it would be quite unrealistic to imagine that there won't be a bit of initial caution during the opening frames. Expect an early, feeling out period to re-establish or recognize new game plans, set traps, or employ optimal strategies.

That lull should last about 13 seconds, or however long it takes Huck and Afolabi to get their feet planted for toe to toe leverage in the center of the ring in Berlin.

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