

Is He Going To Be "Rock Em Sock Em" Rigondeaux?

Written by Michael Woods

Wednesday, 04 December 2013 17:25



Joseph Agbeko certainly gave off the vibe of a winner on Wednesday afternoon at BB King's in NYC, at a presser to hype the Saturday AC card, promoted by Top Rank, portions of which will run on HBO. The two-time champ, who now trains with Roger Mayweather in Vegas, told me that he is damn sure he's going to be the first pro to solve Guillermo Rigondeaux, the Cuban cutie who is promising to be less of a mover, and more of a sniper moving forward. "Agbeko is the most competitive match I can make for Rigo," the promoter of the event, Bob Arum told me. "Rigo is an unbelievable talent. Our matchmakers wanted to match him with Chris Avalos, who's very active, thinking that would be an exciting fight, but there's no argument this is the more competitive."

Arum called for the press and fight watchers to shelve pre-concieved notion of what an exciting fighter is, and more so focus on the exemplary technical skills of Rigo on Saturday.

The boxer got low blowed when he was hit from all sides by people complaining he ran to much, and wasn't a fan friendly boxer, and was a difficult guy to promote, following his UD12 win over Nonito Donaire in April.

Now, to be honest, no, he's a sweet scientist sort, best appreciated not by the masses, but by the more educated classes, who can appreciate his artistry. And he's shy fellow, one not comfortable with the spotlight. I saw him looking down a lot, never smiling, during the whole presser. So, no, he's not a fighter likely to break out into being a PPV attraction, or a trash-talking seat-seller who is a promoters' dream. But there's room under our big tent for the guy, in my view.

I asked Arum if it's unfair to ask Rigo to be what he's not, to morph into a rumbler type? "I think he should fight in a way he's most comfortable fighting," said Arum, who turns 82 on Sunday,

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and will celebrate with his kids, and wife and grand-children in NYC, "I think a lot appreciate that way of fighting and a lot enjoy a different way of fighting, and they are allowed to have that. I thought the same in his last fight, and I also had that mindset, wanted more rock em sock em, but in retrospect I realized what I saw was a real talent, and a fighter should have the ability to show real talent even if a good many fight fans don't appreciate that type of performance and don't rate it a real talent."

I told Arum that in the case of a Rigo, I don't sit on the sidelines and nitpick and demand he engage in tradefests. But at certain points, I do find myself wishing for more, for more offense, for more concentrated offense, because I think, I know, that he is capable of doing more. Arum agreed, and told me he thinks the fighters' people are working to convince him to show less defensive adeptness, and ramp up the offense.

We shall see if the 33-year-old dog can shift his style so late in the game, or if he's set in his ways, on Saturday night.

Agbeko photo courtesy of Ed Keenan

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the Roast says:

Naaah, I doubt Rigo will change his spots. He will fight how he always fights. Rigo does not bore me. Hopkins bores me. I'm not sure what the difference is but I enjoy Rigo but B-Hop puts me to sleep. I talked to some guys after Mayweather-Canelo and they were saying Floyd don't want to fight. They want Floyd to stand and go toe to toe with the kid. I'm telling them Floyd is a boxer, he's gonna do his thing. Seems like I've been having the same conversation with average Joe types since the Sweet Pea Whitaker days. Maybe Agbeko can make Rigo look good. I'll be watching for sure.

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Radam G says:

The Cuban Willie Rigo is going to KAYO Agbeko in the early to mid rounds. Holla!

brownsugar says:

[QUOTE=the Roast;40743]Naaah, I doubt Rigo will change his spots. He will fight how he always fights. Rigo does not bore me. Hopkins bores me. I'm not sure what the difference is but I enjoy Rigo but B-Hop puts me to sleep. I talked to some guys after Mayweather-Canelo and they were saying Floyd don't want to fight. They want Floyd to stand and go toe to toe with the kid. I'm telling them Floyd is a boxer, he's gonna do his thing. Seems like I've been having the same conversation with average Joe types since the Sweet Pea Whitaker days. Maybe Agbeko can make Rigo look good. I'll be watching for sure.[/QUOTE]

Great comments about the average joes Roast..... and as RG stated Rigo will have no choice but to take this guy out because Agbeko never takes it easy or allows the opposition to rest... Also when thing get rough King Kong will transform into a billy goat. I'm sure Rigo is aware of the reasons to not go 12 rounds with this guy.

amayseng says:

There are fighters and there are boxers. Can't fault either of the two. Rigo's razor sharp counters do not bore me, Hopkins does not bore me, maybe because he seems vulnerable to me at such an advanced age there is always that question of if something physically could go wrong for him and can change the fight in a punch or two. However a mid to late 30's Hopkins did bore me. The one who fought Jermain Taylor, yeah that was toooooo conservative and boring and he paid for it.

Floyd is a straight boxer, defensive first. The average Joes bought into Floyds fake hype of going "Toe to

Toe" with the Ghost and him and his dad talking about "walking" down Canelo.

By the way did anyone else hear of Mike Tyson calling Pac's masterpiece against Rios as "willie Pep" esque?

Quite a compliment for sure...

brownsugar says:

Manny looked like Mayweather against Rios...stylistically its the best he ever looked too me.....although you have to also consider the competition... Rios is still world class at any weight between 140 & 147.

To make a world class fighter literally look like a punch bag is a noteworthy achievement.

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In defense of Mayweather, he stayed in the pocket against Canelo for at least 11 rounds.

Radam G says:

Now you know I heard it. And said it on Skype. Preach, Iron Mike, PREACH! Holla!

amayseng says:

[QUOTE=brownsugar;40788]Manny looked like Mayweather against Rios...stylistically its the best he ever looked too me.....although you have to also consider the competition... Rios is still world class at any weight between 140 & 147.

To make a world class fighter literally look like a punch bag is a noteworthy achievement.

In defense of Mayweather, he stayed in the pocket against Canelo for at least 11 rounds.[/QUOTE]

i agree i think floyd fought a good active fight. but the talk of walking down canelo to us hardcore fans

is different from the average joe buying a ppv with different expectations..

stormcentre says:

Man, this Rigondeaux dude give him a few years and if he's managed properly (read if TR doesn't cash out on his stubborn but understandable attitude) he will/could be the guy that fills or betters Mayweather's shoes.

He is very, very good.

Actually, I would love to see Big Bad Bob try and cash out on him, but fail (again).

I think TR already tried with Donaire.

Radam G says:

Sorry, Storm, but Cuban Willie Rigo doesn't have a few more years. Like 90 percent of Cubans -- when he was in the Cuban-boxing mill -- he put his age back, so that he could compete longer in the amateurs. He is officially 33-years old, but don't be shock that he is actually 37 to 40 years old. Holla!

The Shadow says:

Sorry guys, I'm going to rant a little here because I don't like the flack Rigo is taking.

I see articles about him and people are talking bad about his style. Specifically, Dan Rafael from ESPN and Chris Mannix from Sports Illustrated, who I respect for his hustle, are posting

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opinion pieces with flawed theses that actually damage Rigo's livelihood and it's not fair!

Even this article suggests that his style is boring. I have yet to hear a boxing insider -- not a freakin' writer who never, ever stepped in the ring ever but a practitioner -- who said his fight with Donaire was boring. It was a clinical display. Back to that in a moment.

These motherf*ckers say the stupidest sh*t and it's really pis*ing me off because it hurts their earning power.

For one, Rigo has gotten a bad rap because he in his FIRST 12-round fight fought tentatively. He jsut came from the amateur system, give me a fucking break!

After that, he demolished the sh*t out of Teon Kennedy, knocked him up and down like a damn yo-yo. He has one-punch KO power although his opponents routinely outweigh him by 10-15 pounds.

Here's the thing I have the biggest issue with: Rafael and Mannix both EXPLICITLY say that it was Rigo's fault that the fight wasn't entertaining.

Did they watch the fucking fight???????

Rigo stood in the center of the ring and traded with him in the VERY FIRST ROUND to make his presence felt.

After that, the Filipino Flash felt the power, was shook, tentative and had no intention of just barging in because he did not like those nuclear left hands coming back.

RG, co-sign for me, please. Those left hands have to hurt like hell.

"He worked behind his jab, landed thudding power shots and frustrated the aggressive Donaire by [B]refusing to stand and trade.[/B] Yet in the aftermath of the bout, the narrative became that the[U] entertaining Donaire wanted a fight but that the defensive-minded Rigondeaux was content to win without engaging in one.[/U]"

This bastard is adding to that narrative with this borderline slander.

I'm a huge fan of Rigo's technique. What upsets me is that I've read his backstory and what he has to do to support his family. They don't truly grasp -- or maybe they do but don't care -- that their frivolous journalism hurts his ability to make money.

Donaire was EQUALLY responsible for the fight being a "stinker" to some. (I personally found the fight extremely intriguing and very entertaining.)

Was Donaire aggressive? Nah. He followed the superior craftsman around the ring like a bum asking for change, got countered HARD and INSTANTLY every single time he connected.

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What especially bothers me is that Rigo fights just like Floyd Mayweather with maybe the exception being that Floyd leads a little more. He's the biggest draw. Yet Arum says the most disparaging stuff about him and his marketability.

It's bad. It's like people get a reputation and lazy writers run with the narrative. And people suffer from it. Mayweather's a ducker, Khan has no chin, Broner is a Floyd wannabe, etc. etc. There may be truth to it but it doesn't mean it defines their career.

Even with GGG, which has been posted in here, he gets branded as just a heavy puncher. No, he's f*cking technician who uses superior technique to maximize his power. So lazy, so ignorant.

Even Paulie M. got stuck with the feather fisted rap, which is true. So when he gets a stoppage win, lazy writers, who probably didn't even watch the sh*t, say he won "by cuts."

No, just like he said at the first presser with Judah, he had the dude on the ropes, unleashed a combination and Smoger stepped in to stop it. It wasn't stopped on no damn cuts. It was a super legit TKO by a barrage of pillow punches.

Back to Rigo.

I really hope he starts getting some credit. I hope he goes to GBP/SHO because they can match him up well and will actually redirect the narrative and focus on the amazing skill he displays.

Sorry for the rant, guys. But I know you guys also appreciate the science, not just uncouth violence under the guise of a sport.

Reading the second Rigo-bashing article in two days from a major medium that blamed Rigo for the fight being "boring" -- when in fact as much, if not more, should go to Donaire who was clearly shook and came in trying to win with just a left hook -- just made my blood boil because it hurts the man who's here alone, supporting a family he may never again see only to have lazy reporting hurt his earning power.

That hurts me. Maybe I'm sensitive. Maybe I shouldn't care about what he had to endure as a defector. But I do. I'm human. F*ck it.

I personally can't wait to see the feather punching Paulie and the boring Rigo strut their stuff tomorrow.

SouthPaul says:

Interesting spiel. Paulie went on a similar rant about the media. Checkout Steve Kim's latest two piece article. Covers the topic well.

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The Shadow says:

[QUOTE=SouthPaul;40823]Interesting spiel. Paulie went on a similar rant about the media. Checkout Steve Kim's latest two piece article. Covers the topic well.[/QUOTE]

Thanks, SP, checking it out now! And sorry once again for ranting...

The Shadow says:

SouthPaul, Maxboxing's interface is horrendous. I couldn't find Part II, can you link it, please?

SouthPaul says:

I don't see it either, Shadow. Maybe later tonight.

The Shadow says:

[QUOTE=SouthPaul;40831]I don't see it either, Shadow. Maybe later tonight.[/QUOTE]

I see what you mean, though! Nice read and good find, appreciate it.

Radam G says:

Co-SIGN, The Shadow! Willie Rigo does get a lot of hate. It won't stop even when he kayos this next cat. And, YUP! He left hand hurts like a mutha. Holla!

stormcentre says:

[QUOTE=Radam G;40814]Sorry, Storm, but Cuban Willie Rigo doesn't have a few more years. Like 90 percent of Cubans -- when he was in the Cuban-boxing mill -- he put his age back, so that he could compete longer in the amateurs. He is officially 33-years old, but don't be shock that he is actually 37 to 40 years old. Holla![/QUOTE]

Oh, OK didn't know that RG.

How old do you think he is then?

Radam G says:

I suspect that he is likely in his late 30s -- very near 40. Holla!

amayseng says:

Deepwater called out Rigo a year ago for being late 30's.....

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Damn Deepwater, time to resurface and return to the TSS....? no?

The Shadow says:

Dude, you could be right! I just read an article that his stepson Julio Cesar Rigondeaux is 20 and that he's raised him since he was four. Do the math.

According to the same piece, Rigo also stayed on something called "The Farm" for nine years, which is where they breed their fighters like cattle. NINE YEARS! And as an aside, the other Olympic champs would revere this dude and watch him in awe.

Be as it may, if his old age is true, the dude is an AMAZING athlete. He's an amazing athlete regardless, but if true, then this man has to be the chosen one.

Radam G says:

It's never about da age, but da stage. A take-care-of-himself-boxer is good well into his 50s. Putting the age back is boxing as cherry pie. That is just how the game is superfly. Holla!

The Shadow says:

Today, Rigo "rehydrated" to 125. Wow.

brownsugar says:

Rigo maintains his natural density like Mayweather... Doesn't have to come down 2 weight classes like most fighters. Cool.

Radam G says:

Because he is in superior condition. Holla!

brownsugar says:

King Kong was left at home ...Agbeko brought a lamb to the fight instead.

amayseng says:

Rigo landing 10 punches a round.....

YIKES...

I love and appreciate true boxers and Rigo may never be beat, but no one will care because he is boring

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and he has power and speed, he is capable of so much more.....

all the power to him for winning, but he wont be on tv by next spring

The Shadow says:

King Kong is as much to blame. I didn't see the fight but I saw the stats. Rigo threw almost 900 punches? Maybe they count those half-punch feints he does because his accuracy is FAR greater than 17%.

But King Kong, from what I could follow via live updates, was afraid to get hit, knowing that Dr. Rigo Da Surgeon would dissect him with the slightest misstep.

Just like Floyd, his opponents go into survival mode. Why take a chance punching, wasting energy and risking a probable sharp counter when the opening isn't there?

It may be frustrating to watch but imagine how frustrating it must be to actually endure. No opening and the slightest mistake you make, you get punched really, really hard by some little stealthy human incarnation of a panther.

I think Rigo may be off HBO soon. We will probably see at the MGM in April vs. Lomachenko. From there, we will probably see him in the summer on SHO.

I know Espinoza would love to have him.