

The Prophet

Written by Rick Folstad
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The Prophet was a no-show, so we didn't get a chance to ask him about his clever nickname.

If Daniel "The Prophet" Attah had shown up for Tuesday's national conference call, maybe we would have learned where he got the name and why he picked it.

"So Daniel, tell us about your nickname. How did you come up with The Prophet?

Pretty catchy. You see things the rest of us don't see? You know how to peek into the future, read a few palms, predict the weather? You got a Biblical thing going on here?"

Maybe The Prophet looked into the future and decided to skip the conference because he didn't like what he saw.

Maybe the truth won't set him free as much as it will set him on his butt Saturday night at the Dodge Theatre in Phoenix, Arizona.

That's when Attah (20-0-1, 8 KOs) takes on super-featherweight champion Acelino "Popo" Freitas (31-0, 29 KOs) on Showtime for Freitas' WBA and WBO titles.

Popo - who is so popular in Brazil they televised his wedding - has put up some pretty good numbers. He won his first 29 fights by knockout, though most of the names of the guys he beat wouldn't raise any eyebrows.

When Freitas finally did get into the ring with one of the better fighters in the world, he didn't knock him out, but he still won, defeating former WBO champ Alfred Kotey in a 10-round decision in September 2001.

Then, on Jan. 12, he beat Joel Casamayor for Casamayor's WBA title, again going the distance.

He's human after all.

Asked how he thought he would do against Attah, Freitas took the high road, which was also the easy road. He wouldn't promise a knockout, but predicted a win, either by knockout or decision.

"Going into this fight, I don't believe I can lose," he said.

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Headly stuff.

Oscar Suarez, Freitas' trainer and translator, didn't climb much farther out on the limb of controversy, saying simply that if The Prophet made the wrong move - didn't see clearly into the future - it would be over inside 12 rounds.

Asked what concerned them most about Attah, who is a southpaw, Suarez said the Nigerian is an awkward, tricky fighter with a good hook.

"But I feel in my heart that his most dangerous thing is his head," Suarez said.

"Popo has to be cautious. I hope we have the right referee."

If there's a super-featherweight food chain, Freitas is sitting comfortably at the top, picking his teeth.

He's wondering if that dream fight with Floyd Mayweather will ever really happen, Mayweather wisely eating his way up to the 135-pound class.

Then again, if Mayweather loses to Jose Luis Castillo in their rematch on Oct. 5, Freitas said he wants Castillo. You've got to go where the money is. Besides, like most of us, Freitas said he thought Castillo beat Mayweather that first fight, but that's a whole different column.

Let's just say Freitas first wants to "clean up" the 130-pound division starting with Attah.

That's his prophecy.