

Showtime, Gimme An Upset!

Written by Michael Woods

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One of my resolutions for 2008, beyond the obvious drop of 10 (OK, 15 pounds) and watch less reality TV, and read more classic literature, is upsets.

I want to see 'em.

OK, there is nothing I can do to make this resolution a reality, but hopefully Showtime will hear my New Year's request, and offer up an upset special on ShoBox tonight, or in the Malignaggi-Ngoudjo fight on Saturday evening.

I asked Showtime's analyst extraordinaire, Steve Farhood, who never has to resolve to strip even a spare ounce from his frame, that mutt, which Showtime fight holds the greatest likelihood for an upset.

Farhood tells TSS that Paulie "Magic Man" Malignaggi's defending his IBF junior welterweight title against top-ranked Herman Ngoudjo holds the most prominent possibility for an upset.

Ngoudjo, at 16-1, nine KOs, the International Boxing Federation (IBF) No. 1 junior welterweight contender challenges IBF champion Paulie Malignaggi (23-1, five KOs), and Farhood says there is a 30% chance he will dethrone Paulie.

"He's a quality fighter, does he have the speed to deal with Paulie, not sure, that's the reason he's the underdog," Farhood said. "He showed good boxing ability against Randall Bailey, and the fight will be more competitive than Paulie's fight against Ndou. Is Paulie looking past Herman, I don't think he's the type to do that. He's overcome so much in his career, especially with his hands. I think it will be a pleasing fight."

Lamont Peterson(23-0, 11 KOs), who is ranked No. 3 in the WBO and No. 6 in the WBA at 140 pounds, will face fellow unbeaten Antonio Mesquita (34-0, 27 KOs), a Brazilian now residing in Las Vegas. Farhood gives the 'dog a 15% chance at toppling Lamont.

"Antonio's a rare animal, he's 34-0 and he's stepping up," Farhood said. "The quality of his opposition has been poor. He does have a legit right hand, and that's the drama here. He's a lower case Mayorga."

Anthony (25-0, 18 KOs), a lightweight who is ranked No. 1 in the WBO, No. 4 in the WBC and No. 12 in the IBF, will meet Jose Antonio Izquierdo (16-1-1, 13 KOs) of Chihuahua, Mexico, by way of Pinar Del Rio, Cuba. Izquierdo, who defeated Nick Casal in his last ShoBox appearance, is a replacement for Guadalupe Rosales, who withdrew due to illness. Farhood gives the late replacement a 10% chance of winning.

"Jose needs to rough him up, and he can get pretty nasty in there. He wants to get Anthony with his gloves and anything else at his disposal," the analyst said.

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Overall, for those still unsure which bro is which, Farhood tells TSS is the "slightly better boxer" and a better defender than his bro, and has the edge, potential wise, moving forward.

Please, let my resolution for more upsets in 2008 have more success than my weight loss efforts!