

Cotto Tries Not To Dwell On Cheating Question...WOODS

Written by Michael Woods

Tuesday, 20 September 2011 16:58



One would think that if Antonio Margarito tried to use hardened hand wraps against Shane Mosley back in January 2009, that he'd used them before.

It makes sense, doesn't it?

But I offer that while it makes some sense, it isn't fair to make that assumption, that leap in logic.

Yes readers, we are taking a break from SuckerPunchGate, and the "Will Manny and Mayweather ever fight?" debate long enough to revisit an oldie but goodie: the Antonio Margarito handwrap controversy from 2009.

The occasion is called for because Margarito will take on Miguel Cotto on Dec. 3 at Madison Square Garden, the big room, and the two boxers hit Manhattan on Tuesday to hype the much anticipated redo.

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Most fight fans seem to be of the mindset that Margarito is rightfully saddled with the nickname "Margacheato," because they don't buy it that he was unaware, that he didn't know then trainer Javier Capetillo had put in pads with elements of plaster of paris on them into his gloves, before Margarito was to enter the ring against Shane Mosley.

Cotto, in NYC, said he does not know if Margarito was cheating when they got it on. But he showed a picture taken on the night he fought Margarito on his cell phone to a group of writers which he said showed a tear in Margarito's wrapped hands, a tear in the tape and gauze. He implied that something shady was afoot on that night. He said he "didn't know" who took the photo, which he got at the beginning of the year but that he didn't spend too much time or energy thinking about whether the Mexican's gloves were loaded on July 26, 2008.

"I accept my defeat like a man," he said of the first scrap, which saw Cotto battered and done in round 11. "It's the first time I show the pictures to anybody."

He said he wasn't bothered by the fixation on the handwraps. "The thing with Margarito was 2008 the chapter that was closed in that book..this is another chapter," he said. He said that "Margarito's just another human being. I don't have to like him, I just have to fight him December third."

Looking forward, Cotto said that he'd be watching that first fight for the very first time soon, in order to determine what he did wrong, so he could correct it. He said that he overtrained in the first scrap, and wouldn't make the same mistake this time.

The Puerto Rican and the Mexican will fight at a max of 153 pounds, and Manny Steward will work Cotto's corner. Margarito busted on Cotto for trying to make the fight at 150, then 152, then 153. If junior middleweight title is on the line, the max should be 154, he said. He also complained that there would be no weigh in the day of the fight, to try and prevent excessive weight gain.

Promoter Bob Arum also had bantamweight titlist Nonito Donaire with him. He also fights in New York, on Oct. 22. The Filipino Flash got into a New York State of mind with a Robert DeNiro in Taxi Driver imitation, asking "You talkin' to me? You talkin' to me?" when he got a turn at the mike. "I've always wanted to say that."

After this one, Arum said he'll likely go to 122, maybe fight Jorge Arce, or the Rigo-Ramos winner.

Arum, who has defended Margarito, saying that he didn't think the boxer was trying to cheat, repeated that assertion. He called Margarito a friend, and I took note of the fact that he didn't use the same term for Cotto. Cotto was then asked about Arum saying, during the presser, that Margarito was an honest man. "Honest can be different for each person," Cotto said. I pondered that answer for a good five minutes...

The fighter looked to be nearing tears when he recalled that his late father saw him looking battered after the Margarito fight, and that does impact how he sees the rematch: "Those kind

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of things make it a little more personal."

--Arum told people that the pre-sale for the rematch at MSG is the largest ever for the venue for a fight.

--He said during a sitdown before the presser that it will be nice to have the bout in a vibrant arena, but he made sure to clarify that not all casino shows lack buzz. As of Tuesday morning, he said, there were a total of ten tickets left at the MGM for Pacquiao-Marquez III, so fight fans, not people there because they got a freebie ticket, can make a casino arena electric.

--Arum got a little salty when asked who Cotto and Margarito might fight next. He said he's sick of people asking who will fight who prematurely. Man has a point; we have trouble staying in the present and tend to fixate more on speculation.

--Arum also said he's sick of writers making too much of a loss. "If he loses he's got to hang up his gloves. It's not necessarily so," Arum said.

---Arum lauded Cotto and Margarito for standing up and fighting Pacman, unlike the "p---y" Mosley.

---He said that in Puerto Rico, the PR fans had daggers in their eyes when Margarito was there.