Written by Ron Borges
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It is always unwise to bet against Bernard Hopkins but if you must this might be the time.

The 46-year-old reincarnation of “The Old Mongoose,’’ Archie Moore, tonight puts himself on stage, although hardly at risk against former light heavyweight champion Chad “Not Really All That Bad’’ Dawson at the Staples Center in an HBO pay-per-view show there is no real reason to buy, but three.

If you are a fan of Hopkins, geriatrics or history it might be worth the investment to see if the oldest boxing champion in history can outpoint someone like Dawson, a 29-year-old southpaw in the prime of his career who is difficult to hit and seems to have only minimal interest in engaging in all-out combat.

To say Dawson (30-1, 17 KO) is boring to watch is like saying Rick Perry is an idiot – pretty much impossible to deny. Although he once held portions of the light heavyweight title you couldn’t give tickets away to his fights even in his hometown and to watch him on television is to

do so only if the other choice is solitary confinement in San Quentin. You accept the lighter sentence.

Having said that, Dawson is two things that could be difficult for Hopkins (52-5-2, 32 KO) at this stage of his career. He can move and is willing to hit and run all night long. In fact, he seems to prefer it.

Some say the fact that he's a southpaw is an added problem but not for a fighter as well-schooled as Hopkins. He knows how to beat southpaws from a technical standpoint and is in fact 12-1 against them, so the question becomes, can he deal with Dawson's movement?

Now there's no question he tore apart Winky Wright, who for some reason is now a technical advisor to Dawson (which is like asking Mike Tyson to be a technical advisor to an opponent of Lennox Lewis'), but Wright was more of a defensive genius than a mover and he was past his prime when he met Hopkins.

The fact of the matter is Hopkins is no longer what he was, nor, at his age, should he be. He is 6-3-1 in his last 10 fights and hasn't had a knockout since he stopped Oscar De La Hoya in 2004. He was exceedingly impressive in wins over Kelly Pavlik and Jean Pascal (which happened twice even though the judges mistakenly called the first fight a draw) and became the latest in a growing line of men who gave aged Roy Jones, Jr. a beating but he was non-competitive against Joe Calzaghe once Calzaghe decided to bide his time and wear him down. And he has really not faced anyone with Dawson's legs and long jab in years.

Might Hopkins still find ways to undress Dawson? Yes, yet that doesn't mean this fight comes without risk. The question will be can Hopkins successfully fight in spurts – as he now does – and still lure Dawson into enough exchanges to beat him down mentally and then physically? That, really, is the only issue because when it comes to technical boxing skill Bernard Hopkins has forgotten more about prize-fighting than Chad Dawson will ever know.

"I understand that for now I'm the Mongoose (Moore),'' Hopkins said. "As long as I have the desire to continue to win and not embarrass myself and embarrass the sport, I think at the end when it's time to go, it's time to go. I can't think about winning and think about retiring at the same time. That's very counterproductive. So I figure that instead of worrying about what if's, worry about where I'm at now.

"And I think…as a matter of fact I know…I'm in a good place right now. I'd rather be defending a title than trying to win a title. So I'm enjoying the moment while I'm here and I'm going to continue to stack the pages as the pages become interesting, they become meaningful. And I think everybody should just enjoy me while I'm here, because nothing lasts forever and I think we all know that.

"Watch the performance. Watch the ageless warrior systematically break (down) a young, strong, tall light heavyweight that everybody had high hopes for two years ago and now they're

reserving that because they're not sure because Bernard Hopkins is fighting him. They don't understand and they don't want to risk Bernard Hopkins making them look like a bad, what they call a predictor. So, I understand that. That's part of respect when they act like that.''

True that. Hopkins has earned the respect of anyone who has been paying attention to him for what seems like the last 50 years. Although he at times could be a difficult personality, is that not the case with most geniuses? And Hopkins inside a boxing ring is certainly that. In the end he walked his own path and it has led him to become one of boxing's biggest figures and a Hall of Fame fighter with a depth of knowledge that is unrivaled among today's practitioners of the dark art of fisticuffs.
Hopkins wins these days because he refuses to give in physically to the temptations of life and because he is mentally stronger than 10 miles of garlic fields. He has obviously learned all the intricacies of a difficult trade and he learned them in the best incubator there is – the hard-knock gyms around Philadelphia.

He deserves the highest compliment there is, which is to say he is a "professional.'' That is what Dawson will be dealing with Saturday night. He will be dealing with a highly-educated professional. He may be 46 but it would be unwise for Dawson to give that one ounce of consideration because age is unlikely to determine who wins.

The winner will be the best tradesman and the man who trades most effectively, most efficiently and most often.

"So, Chad Dawson said I'm dirty,'' Hopkins said with the menacing voice of a paid assassin. "All fights are dirty to me. Some are dirtier than others. So whatever he thinks I can do, he has the capabilities, if he wants to do it back. But the referee's in the ring, the third man they call him, that will oversee anything that he does or I do. I'm coming to win a fight and I don't have to be dirty to win a fight. But I'm in a fight.''

"When you're in the fight, things happen he might say is an accident. Things happen I might say is an accident. It's up to the referee. The public will believe and see what they see and I leave it like that. I don't complain.''

In other words, Chad, how about you?

"I just want to go ahead and win this fight, and I'll win this fight big,'' Hopkins boasted. "I want to embarrass another so-called young gun of the boxing world, and prove that Bernard Hopkins is not better, but just different.

"It takes me a round or two until I know exactly what I have to do in a fight. You can't over study (for) a test, so your natural instincts have to be your guide. The great athletes always adjust. I don't care what sport it is, only an elite athlete can do that.

"The difference in this fight is that I am fighting Chad Dawson who has plenty of credentials. He believes he is the guy to beat me. I have to win to prove him wrong. The problem is whether or not he means what he believes. He has to come out in character and not be the Dawson that he

has been for many of his fights.

“His name doesn't match the last three or four outcomes. When you have the name 'Bad' and you're not Michael Jackson, you have to be able to own that. They call me 'The Executioner' for a reason.

“I am knocking on the door of being the oldest 'Fighter of the Year' ever. I always have a motivation, something to push me to win and that motivation is to become the oldest 'Fighter of the Year.'

“I’m not surprised I’m the underdog. Am I the underdog because of my age or because of my resume? It must be my age because I know can't be the resume. I’m 12-1 against southpaws, arguably 13-0 with the Calzaghe fight (a split decision loss). I’m a right handed fighter which is death to a southpaw.’’

More significantly, he’s a well-schooled professional, which these days is death to nearly all the young boxers he faces. If it is to be different for Chad Dawson he’s going to have to prove he’s more than just another graduate student in the class of a pugilistic professor emeritus, and I wouldn’t bet on that.

Comment on this article

ali says:

B hop will not win this fight I'm 99.9% sure of it....I know its crazy to be this bold especially when it comes to a Hopkins fight....but I think we r going the best Chad we have ever seen and we will once again be talking about him as one of the pound 4 pound best...

Radam G says:

Ali Baba, HUM! Y U don't get it? Holla!

ali says:

[QUOTE=Radam G;10017]Ali Baba, HUM! Y U don't get it? Holla![/QUOTE]
What do u mean by I dont get it....im just a G I make bold predictions fu$% it shit happens if im wrong I will man up and own it u on the other hand u will stand on the fence like a straight sucker then if you right u will stay I told u so do oh i get it u have testicular cancer LOL! !!

Radam G says:

HEHEHEHEHEHEHE! aKKK, you are stranger than my dog Chocolate Treat. Holla!

brownsugar says:

Borges must have a crystal ball.

brownsugar says:

the WBC rules the fight a technical draw,... F#&^%!!!!!!