

Cotto-Margarito 24/7 Brings The Drama, Emotion

Written by Michael Woods
Monday, 21 November 2011 11:56



An HBO 24/7 doesn't have to feature Floyd Mayweather or Miguel Cotto to be compelling. The Saturday debut of the Cotto-Margarito episode one cemented that.

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Liev Schrieber, aka The Voice, told watchers that the Dec. 3 rematch between the Puerto Rican and Mexican-born hitters is a battle between the good guy and the bad guy, the guy who has never been and will never be accused of being anything less than a principled professional, and the guy who quite possibly has cheated his way to prominence.

"He used it, he used the plaster the night of the fight with me. He looks and he acts like a criminal," Cotto says. "I'm a clean fighter, there was nothing illegal," responds Margarito, looking like he should play Tony Montana in a "Scarface" remake, of the circumstances of their 2008 clash.

In Cocoa Beach, FL, we see Cotto, having come from Orlando, working out. Cotto said he's better today than in 2008, because his passion is back. His trainer is Pedro Diaz, the third cornerman in his last four fights. His uncle Evangelista, ex strength and conditioning coach Joel Santiago and Manny Steward were at the helm before.

Cotto said people will know Margarito was cheating after he wins on Dec. 3, and he's right, people will assume that Margarito was using loaded gloves in their first tangle if Cotto gets it done.

Margarito is training in Temoaya, Mexico, about 10,000 feet above sea level, as opposed to Southern California. The show mentioned that his career took a dive when in January 2009 the California commission confiscated hardened pads which were being inserted into the fighter's gloves before he was set to fight Shane Mosley. It does strike me that it is strange that Margarito doesn't hammer ex trainer Javier Capetillo, who he supposedly viewed as a father figure, for inserting hard pads into his gloves, which resulted in the diminishment of the boxer's reputation. Cynics would say of course Margarito doesn't hammer Capetillo, because Capetillo has allowed the bus to run over him, allowed himself to bear the blame for the event, and Margarito owes him one. "We are moving on," Margarito says. Easier said than done..

We see Capetillo, who can work with boxers but can't corner them. He says that he grabbed pads already out on the table and says he wasn't paying attention. "I paid and I'm still paying for it. And I'm not guilty of anything. And neither is Margarito," he says.

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Cotto begs to differ. He said he wondered if the plaster pads were used against him. Mostly, he's taken the high road when asked if Margarito cheated. He's said he wasn't sure. But he is vehement now.

We saw a synopsis of the 2008 clash. Then Cotto shows his photo which he says proves the wraps were iffy. "It could have been twisted. It could have been a booger I had there," Margarito says of the discoloration seen on the wrapped fist. Schrieber says that Cotto says the redness seen is dye from the gloves, but then Cotto says the redness on the pad is the same as the redness on a confiscated pad...so that left me confused. All in all, the "evidence" wouldn't fly in court, so we will be left to wonder.

"He play with my health..thank God I'm healthy, but it could be worse," Cotto says. Margarito says he told Cotto to his face he could wrap his hands, and he would beat him.

The cataract surgery at the end of May is referenced. "Everything is perfect," Margarito says. That remains to be seen, through the eyes of the NY commission. Trainer Robert Garcia says Margarito looks superb in training and appears to have no worries about the artificial lens in the eye. (Side note: I do not dismiss out of hand the word of the doctors Top Rank has assembled who say Margarito is in no more danger than any other boxer. I don't think they've collected a couple joker hacks to say this. And without knowing the specifics of the case, I do know that advances in medical technology can oftentimes mean that manmade devices and prosthetic body parts can be as sturdy or even more so than the original device or body part. But to the best of my knowledge, their doctors do not specialize in boxing. And, I do not know of a precedent for this, of any other boxer who had the artificial lens inserted and then fought with the lens in. And judicial bodies like to see precedents, because that allows them cover in case things go wrong. Everyone is worried in this day of age about getting their pants sued off. So they tend to veer toward the side of caution. And, we also hope, that powers that be all have the health and well being of the boxers in mind. We all hope that is the paramount reasoning used in this and all situations, that goes without saying. And until explicitly shown otherwise, I will assume that there is no other agenda for the NY commission than the health and well being of the boxer. We all have to be judicious with our judgements and assumptions. Talk of this being a morality play, or a reaction to the UFC's pending suit against the state for not licensing MMA..I need to see compelling evidence those are anything more than suppositions. I suggest we all, until it's proven otherwise, assume that all involved are doing the right thing, and lobbying with a clean conscience.)

Brandon Rios cracks wise in Margarito camp. "He's like a big kid," Margarito says of Bam Bam. The camp looks to have a happy atmosphere.

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Back in Florida, we hear about the death of Cotto's dad Miguel Sr, who died last January from respiratory distress stemming from asthma. Miguel's mom Juana has stepped in for dad; she oversees the camp, reluctantly. "He was my friend. He was my angel," mom says. "My father? He was everything," Cotto says, as he gets misty. He has taken the death hard and sometimes doesn't want to get out of bed, but does out of obligation.

His father's face is etched on his left shoulder, in ink. "He watch my back, every moment of my life," he says.

His dad was by his side in the hospital after the 2008 fight, and he treasures those moments. His dad will be his corner on Dec. 3, he says.

"Why does he cry so much?" Margarito says, mockingly.

"He doesn't have the same plaster this fight. So it's going to be different," Cotto says.

This fight will happen, it's just a matter of where. A New York Athletic Commission doctor will examine Margarito today and give his assessment to chair Melvina Lathan, who will provide a ruling on licensing tomorrow. A cataract surgery had previously been a disqualifier to get licensed in NY, but the commission has allowed for debate, rather than an automatic DQ. I know of no other boxer that has boxed with an artificial lens but there may be examples I'm unaware of. Stay tuned, fight fans...

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Radam G says:

HBO 24/7 is really gettin' on it sell. Melodrama, propaganda, theatre and bullsh*tology at its BEST. HBO knows how to go to that well. What a fudging PEST!

The bout will be won and lost in that squared jungle. To this day, no boxing commission or any other establishment has proven that Margarito was using "plaster of Paris," or Mexican, or

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California or any darn where else.

"Elements of..." and red color don't mean JACK! With all that imaginary evidence, that the Cali crooks -- I mean commission -- got from Margarito, why didn't the commission turn dat jive into the real thing for the press and the world to see? I know WHY! Because the commission was full of a lot of incompetence super a\$\$holes and serial bullsh*tters. They were gettin' on their 15 minutes of Hollywood-style fame of posturing and play acting.

IMHO this bout, as the last one, will be won in the squared jungle by the better fighter and his team. Holla!