

Hopkins Silences Critics And Agrees To Rematch With Dawson...LOTIERZO

Written by Frank Lotierzo
Monday, 30 January 2012 13:24



Doesn't look much like Dawson was buyin' what Hopkins was sellin' in this weigh-in pic. Note Dawson's bemused expression...Can Hopkins get into Chad's head, or is there no vacancy? (Hogan)

Now that WBC light heavyweight champ Bernard Hopkins 52-1-2 (32) has agreed to meet former title holder Chad Dawson 30-1 (17) in a rematch this coming April 28th in Atlantic City, I suppose those who were quick to jump on Hopkins saying he was looking for a way out of their last fight have to walk that sentiment back. Because there are other fights out there for Hopkins to take with a lower degree of difficulty attached to them. Yet he's going to clash with Dawson again despite not being paid a king's ransom. If Dawson was on his way to breaking Hopkins' will and heart when they last fought, he'll have to start over on April 28th.

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What's been lost since the first fight is that when Dawson slammed Hopkins to the canvas injuring his shoulder, his intent wasn't to injure Hopkins, certainly not to the point that he couldn't continue. It was a message to Hopkins letting him know that he wasn't the least bit intimidated by him and if Bernard thought he was going to incorporate his own brand of MMA into the bout, he was going to get it back in spades. This is a mindset that Hopkins probably didn't think Dawson possessed prior to the fight.

On the other hand, Hopkins, who turned 47 on January 15, wasn't about to continue after he was hurt, thus letting Dawson fight him while he was incapacitated and not at 100%. No one knows for sure to what degree Hopkins was injured, but there can be no doubt that he couldn't continue and be as effective as he would need to be in order to hold off the 29 year-old Dawson.

Now Hopkins has been cleared to fight and the questions that weren't answered when they last fought--the fight was ruled a No Contest--can be. However, there is one caveat this time. And that is the intimidation factor along with Bernard's ability to unnerve Dawson and get inside of his mind if he ever did, is gone. If those questions lingered for some before the last meeting, we now know Chad harbors no self doubt or trepidation about facing Hopkins. If Dawson did nothing else during their last fight, he let Hopkins know that you can't beat me by inducing me to fight as the prey to your assumed role as the predator. No way, no how. Add to that Dawson really believes he made Hopkins look for a way out the last time so he'll be that much more confident and purposeful when they next get in the ring.

For the last seven years, going back to the his first fight against Jermaine Taylor, Hopkins has managed to always take away something that his opponent does really well or wanted to do against him. And this is an advantage he usually holds over his opponents that won't apply to Chad Dawson this time out. If Bernard thinks Dawson was ready for everything before they last met, he'll have to totally reinvent himself to throw Chad off this time. In this upcoming fight Hopkins is going to have to show Dawson with his actions and fists why he can't win instead of conning him into thinking maybe it's not worth the trouble.

If there's been one negative regarding Dawson the fighter, it's his tendency to drift and lose focus almost to the point that he looks disinterested in the outcome during the fight. This is a fault that might be corrected just because Hopkins will be across from him. That, along with the tutelage of trainer John Scully, may have cured Chad's ring complacency.

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Sure, the last bout only lasted a little over five minutes, but if nothing else was gleaned from their time in the ring, it's the fact that Dawson looked like a live wire and touched Hopkins back immediately after Hopkins touched him. Another thing that looked as if it was going to unfold is Dawson understood that to beat Hopkins he needed to set a fast pace and high work-rate, two things Hopkins doesn't fancy and hasn't been forced to address much since his 40th birthday.

Another thing that has to be taken into account for the rematch is the fact there's no love lost between Bernard and Chad. And in a strange twist it seems that it's Dawson who has the more disjointed attitude towards Hopkins than the other way around. Dawson's attitude and demeanor indicate that he sees himself as having something to prove and if he can conclusively beat Hopkins and drive him into retirement, his career will be on the upswing in a big way.

With the fight having been just announced, it seems that Dawson is getting Hopkins at just the right time. Although, that's been said before and Hopkins managed to defy the odds and extended his career. But this time Hopkins is coming off an injury and has in a subtle way indicated that despite holding off "mother nature" it seems as though "father time" is catching him. In other words, it may be a little easier for Dawson to convince Hopkins that he can't win this time than for any other opponent Hopkins has ever fought.

Win or lose, Hopkins wins because he's fighting with house money. If he loses a decision to Dawson, something that's very likely, his legacy or reputation as an all-time great won't be damaged at all. In fact, his legacy won't be tarnished even if Dawson blows through him and knocks him out early. How could it - Hopkins is 47 years old? Most men his age can't touch their toes or do 25 pushups. Yet he's the defending light heavyweight champ heading into this fight and defending the title against the most-skilled and athletic fighter in the division, who's 18 years his junior.

On the other hand, if Hopkins handles Dawson, his legacy will escalate among the pantheon of boxing history's greatest fighters. Add to that Dawson holds every physical advantage one fighter could hold over another into the equation, that would make a clean victory by Hopkins even that much more monumental and career defining.

Picking against Hopkins has always been a risky proposition. And that's part of what makes his rematch with Dawson even more intriguing. It'll be an experience watching Hopkins over the next couple months try to find a way to gain an edge before the fight. From here it looks as if all avenues to short circuit Dawson are closed. Chad appears to be immune to Hopkins

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subterfuge.

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mortcola says:

Hey Frank - Character is destiny. Chad's may be more clearly known by the distractible and underachieving nature of all his other big fights, save for Adamek. Nothing happened in those two rounds against B-Hop to say anything decisively - in fact, my take on the body slam is that it was a trying-too-hard over-reaction to the barest inkling of B-Hops shenanigans, which I'm not sure had even really surfaced in that missed punch-and-lean. So, the jury is still very much out as to who handles the psychologic part more effectively, while, you are right, the physical advantages are all Dawson's. Whereas, B-Hop is a warrior and Dawson is a skilled young front-runner. Do they equal each other out?

brownsugar says:

This Critic isn't silent, in fact I'm howing to the top of my lungs with glee!!! Joy, and exultation..... It's very satifying to see Hopkins except this fight even though he's out of his league IMO. But it's a testament to his self-confidence and competetiveness that he's even willing to risk getting into the ring with a man of Dawsons skills at his well-preserved yet much advanced age.

I wouldn't even be salty if he upsets Dawson, because I have to admit,.. a win by Bhop makes grandfathers like myself feel even more beastly than we already are.

The act of Hopkins accepting this fight solidifies him as a HOF'mer win or lose.

He's earned my eternal respect although I'm still picking Dawson to win handily.....Especially in an era where two good boxers won't get within speaking distance of each other unless they get an audible promise from God himself that they're getting a reserved spot in Heaven.

Look at Cloud,.. Pascal and Shumenov won't go near him although both men are soon to be scheduled against much lesser known opposition in the near future... Prospect Ismayl Sillahk can't even bribe a well known contender to share the ring with him and he's only got few fights under his belt an none against any world beaters. (got the whole division running scared)

I could go on and on about the non confrontational state of boxing in at least 6 more weight classes,.. but I'll leave that alone for now.

ali says:

Hopkins fights better when the odds r against him Pavlik, Trinidad but Chad is a lot slicker fighter then then both of them so I don't see b-hop having the same success. The shoulder injury will not be a issue cuz I really don't think he hurt it as bad as we've heard in reports. Father time is

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still undefeated and will stay that way after this fight.

amayseng says:

was the double leg takedown and toss a mindset and message to hopkins that dawson would not be intimidated and mistreated like Lotierzo asks, or is it the fact that dawson attempted this EXACT type of takedown against pascal as well, unsuccessfully, and is a dirty fighter himself?

honestly, i am asking, dawson attempted this same takedown and pascal held him off, wouldnt that just make dawson a dirty fighter ?

Radam G says:

Again, B-Hop may just be on top. He may whup Bad Chad so silly that BC will be crying like toddler and need a lolly pop. Holla!