

It's Simple: Mayweather Holds All Advantages, Will Beat Cotto

Written by Frank Lotierzo
Saturday, 05 May 2012 08:23



What's left to be said that hasn't already been repeated ten thousand times regarding WBC welterweight title holder Floyd Mayweather 42-0 (26) and WBA junior middleweight title holder Miguel Cotto 37-2 (30) concerning their fight tonight?

Even quasi boxing fans know that A) Mayweather is gonna win B) Cotto is the fighter who's much more on the decline due to the fact that he took on the best the junior welterweight and welterweight divisions had to offer instead of waiting for the right time to fight the elite of the

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division, something Mayweather has made a career out of C) Mayweather holds the style advantage, especially against a shop-worn and damaged Cotto regardless of the weight they fight at D) Mayweather wouldn't have agreed to the fight unless he was certain he had all the advantages in his favor- evidenced by the fact that he avoided making the fight five or six years ago when beating Miguel was thought of as being a monumental feat.

And please, save it. Don't tell me how Mayweather is taking a risk fighting Cotto at 154 opposed to Manny Pacquiao fighting him at 145. Let's be honest, Pacquiao tilted the field in his favor by forcing Cotto to come down two pounds under the welterweight limit when they fought three years ago, whereas Mayweather has tilted the field in his favor via waiting until Cotto was on the decline after being worked over by Shane Mosley, Antonio Margarito, Joshua Clottey and Manny Pacquiao.

There's no intrigue to this fight other than Cotto being likable and easy to root for and Mayweather being unlikable and easy to root against.

However, one must be objective. In doing that it must be said that Mayweather is one of the best conditioned, most relaxed and smartest fighters/boxers of his generation. Mayweather is very versatile and needs about one round to figure out and gauge what he needs to do in order to win and at the same time shut down his opponent. Two things not usually highlighted when discussing Mayweather the fighter are how he can fight tired almost as effectively as he can when he's fresh. Another thing that hasn't been mentioned much is how Floyd's confidence is at it's zenith and his self belief in that he can't or won't lose isn't manufactured and is believable now. Sure, he's cherry picked his way along especially since moving up to welterweight but he's been through the big moments so many times and has always managed to come through. For him to doubt himself it'll take a future opponent to literally beat the confidence out of him.

You can break down the styles of Mayweather and Cotto from now until Manny Pacquiao fights Timothy Bradley next month, and it won't change the simple truths that in order for Cotto to upset Mayweather, he'll have to force the fight on the inside without getting his face busted up in the process. And lastly, he'll have to possess enough punch and power to make Floyd go where and do what he doesn't want to. It's really quite simple and doesn't require a high boxing aptitude or a sophisticated observer to analyze this fight. If Cotto thinks he can bring Mayweather to him and surprise him with counters as a strategy to win, he's crazy. Floyd will eat him alive with straight shots that'll get there first and then he'll step back instead of inching in more and leaving himself vulnerable to Cotto's desperate counter-hooks.

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This is why Cotto has to somehow force Mayweather to trade hooks and finishing punches with him on the inside. Early in his career when he could physically overpower his opponents at 140, Cotto would push the fight and try to get them against the ropes or into a corner so he could work them over. But since moving up to 147 and 154 Miguel has been going the route of trying to break his opponents down systematically as opposed to beating them down, due to the fact that he's not a big welterweight and is a very small junior middleweight. For Mayweather, the old Cotto better reappear this Saturday night or he'll endure a one-sided shellacking and never even compete. This is more than likely to happen regardless of the style he tries to fight.

As great and as smart of a fighter as Mayweather is, he's still just a man. And it doesn't matter if you're name is Muhammad Ali, Sugar Ray Leonard, Larry Holmes or Willie Pep, boxers and counter-punchers hate and are most vulnerable to unrelenting pressure. The boxers have to fight pressure off and the counter-puncher doesn't have time to counter because they're constantly being rushed.

It's just that in order to fight as the attacker you must have a good enough defense that allows you to get inside without having your faced butchered up on the way in ie: Joe Frazier and Roberto Duran. You also need to have one punch fight altering power. No, not one punch knockout power, but enough that one big clean shot makes the fighter on the receiving end wanna get out or break off the exchange.

The question for this fight is...."does Cotto have a good enough defense to get inside without getting cut up and can he put enough hurt and heat on Mayweather to make him wish he was somewhere else?"

If your answer to the two questions above are no, then Cotto has no chance whatsoever unless he lands a lottery punch. Of the two, it's easier to envision Cotto hurting Mayweather with a Sunday punch as opposed to him nullifying and avoiding Mayweather's sharp, quick and straight one-twos. But here's the catch for Cotto to get in that one big fight altering shot. To do it, it has to be a shot that Mayweather doesn't see (how many times has that happened to him?) and is totally blind-sided by it. Oh, and it'll have to be a left hook because that's the only punch in Cotto's arsenal that could conceivably hurt Mayweather and possibly shake him. Sounds plausible, right?

Wrong.

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Straight punches neutralize hooks and looping punches most effectively. Even if Miguel can send them before Mayweather cuts loose, Floyd's straight shot will get there first and knock him back just enough to the point where the hook falls short. Another problem is the way Mayweather holds his right hand, he always has his glove there to block the high hook and his elbow positioned to to jam the body hook.

When all is said and done, everything, did I mention everything, favors Mayweather in this fight. The timing of the fight on the calender, the style matchup between the two fighters and the judges will favor Mayweather. In order for Cotto to win, he has to overwhelm and stop Mayweather. Unless Cotto can follow the blue print and bring the same intensity to the fight that Joe Frazier did against Muhammad Ali in their first fight, or ditto Roberto Duran versus Sugar Ray Leonard in their first fight, he'll be defeated convincingly by Mayweather.

If Miguel doesn't have success early, Floyd will become shark-like and smell the blood in the water. His frenzy will be controlled, but make no mistake as Cotto wanes and starts to hesitate slightly and attempt to think his way in, Mayweather will keep giving it to him and giving it to him. The fight may go the distance but the outcome will never be in doubt from about the middle of the third round on.

As outstanding and terrific as I think Miguel Cotto is as a fighter, I don't believe he has the needed physical tools to beat Floyd Mayweather in the year 2012.

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