

THE BREAKDOWN: Lucian Bute-Carl Froch

Written by Lee Wylie
Monday, 21 May 2012 12:05



THE FIGHT:

Lucian Bute versus Carl Froch

Saturday, May 26

At the Capital FM Arena, Nottingham, England, on EPIX and SKY SPORTS.

12 rounds, for Bute's IBF super-middleweight title {168 pounds}

STATISTICS:□□□

Carl Froch □□		Lucian Bute	
34	Age	32	
Nottingham, England	Hometown	Pechea, Romania	
British	Nationality	Canadian	
Mar 16 2002	Pro Debut	Nov 22 2003	
28-2 {20}	Record	30-0 {24}	
6ft 1ins	Height	6ft 2ins	
74 1/2ins	Reach	72 ins	
Orthodox	Stance	Southpaw	
211	Rounds Boxed	193	
66.67	KO %	80	
-6	Compubox +/-	+10	
27%	Connect rate	32%	
33%	Opponent's connect rate	22%	

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Common Opponents

W KO 11	Brian Magee	W TKO 10
W TKO 2	Sergey Tatevosyan	W UD 12
W MD 12	Glen Johnson	W UD 12

Last 5 Fights

L UD Andre Ward	W UD 12 Glen Johnson
W MD 12 Glen Johnson	W KO 4 Jean-Paul Mendy
W UD 12 Arthur Abraham	W TKO 10 Brian Magee
L UD 12 Mikkel Kessler	W KO 9 Jesse Brinkley
W SD 12 Andre Dirrell	W TKO 2 Edison Miranda

**** Career Opposition Quality **1/2

****1/2 Recent Opposition Quality ***

STYLE, STRATEGY & SHOT SELECTION:

Carl Froch: No longer the one dimensional slugger of old, Froch is now more of an unorthodox boxer-puncher -- Awkward but effective rhythm confuses opponents -- Deceptively quick hands -- Good conditioning -- Tall, with long arms, he operates better from the outside than on the inside -- World class chin compensates for defensive deficiencies -- Carries hands low, looking to entice opponents into opening up -- Vastly underrated jab -- Despite common perception, is actually more effective backing up behind the jab, which he throws from a very obtuse angle, as opposed to applying relentless pressure and brawling -- Owner of good power, particularly with the right uppercut, although he hasn't finished an opponent since 2009 -- Distinct lack of footspeed and athleticism hurt him against Andre Ward last time out -- Can overwhelm an opponent with volume -- Supreme self confidence and mental toughness are his best assets.

Lucian Bute: Slick, counter-punching technician -- Uses southpaw angles to full effect -- Tall and rangy, he has a versatile inside/outside game -- Takes advantage of opponent's mistakes -- Hand and footspeed compliment his technical ability -- Difficult to hit clean, can use his legs to motor himself out of danger or can employ upper body and head movement to avoid fire in close -- Good hand-eye coordination -- Straight left hand carries decent power -- Short left uppercut thrown to the head or body, is arguably his most valuable weapon -- Devastating body puncher -- Possesses an educated jab, which he uses to maintain distance or in setting up his straight left hand down the middle -- Excellent combination puncher -- Chin remains a question {was knocked out by current WBA and IBO middleweight champion Gennady Golovkin in the

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2003 World Championships and was nearly finished by Librado Andrade during their first bout}

SCENARIO:

Nobody can deny that so far, Carl Froch has faced the tougher and more varied opposition than Lucian Bute, both at home and over the Atlantic -not many can compete with Froch in this regard. While Froch has always sought out the sternest competition available to him, Lucian Bute has somewhat been regarded as a safety first, stay-at-home fighter who has fought just once outside of his adopted home of Quebec {and that was in his birthplace of Romania}. It will be interesting to see then, just how Bute will respond to not having the luxury of the crowd in his corner for the very first time during his career. Rather ironically, Lucian Bute reminds me of one time Froch target and fellow Brit, Joe Calzaghe. Apart from his appearance and southpaw stance, Calzaghe was another fighter who was heavily criticized for not stepping outside of his comfort zone to test himself. However, as Calzaghe eventually did against both Hopkins and Jones {the first time Calzaghe stepped outside of Great Britain} I fully expect Lucian Bute to pass his overseas test with flying colours against Carl Froch on Saturday night.

For the record, I consider this to be a contest between the second {Bute} and third best {Froch} super-middleweights in the world. In December of last year, Carl Froch lost a unanimous decision to the fighter most consider to be the best 168 pounder in the world {Ward} in a one-sided affair, with Ward dominating most of the rounds. Apart from the obvious problems faced in dealing with his opponent's superior athleticism and speed, Froch was also found wanting once Ward brought his superior inside game into the fight too. Froch had no answer for Ward's mauling and smothering at close quarters. Froch was unable to make any tactical adjustments towards the physical and stylistic advantages that his opponent posed.

Here's Froch's problem. I believe he will be facing an opponent in Bute on Saturday, who holds even greater physical and stylistic advantages over him than was the case last time out when he was up against the number one man in the division, Andre Ward.

Let's take a look at Carl Froch's stance. Froch is a self-professed Roy Jones fan and I believe his stance is a nod to this. Jones' right lead stance provided him with perfect counter-punching opportunities. By having his left hand low, and his right arm extended just in front of him towards his opponents left side, he was able to catch and parry an orthodox opponent's left jab, then using his ridiculous speed, land a counter straight over the top. This stance also allowed Jones to shift his body weight over to his right and land a left hook outside of his opponent's line of vision. This stance served a purpose for Jones.

Needless to say, Carl Froch is not that type of fighter. When I see him operate out of this stance, I feel it is more out of tribute, than out of technical value. Unlike Froch, Roy Jones was always much faster than his opponents during his prime. Against a tricky southpaw like Bute -who is a lot faster and possesses better reflexes than Froch- this stance could prove to be suicide. Against a southpaw, the extended right hand is no longer in position to block or parry a jab -it is actually leaving an opening for a left hand, should the southpaw take a short step to his right, something Bute is very adept at doing {also one of Sergio Martinez' signature moves}.

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Also, take a look at Froch when he throws his left jab. Froch inadvertently negates his own best weapon against the southpaw, his straight right hand. Carl stands so side-on when throwing the jab, that his right shoulder is almost behind him, thus making it nigh on impossible to release his right hand without telegraphing it first. On a similar note, I also happen to think that Froch is wide open for a right hook from the southpaw stance. Because of Froch's body alignment {the right hand is coming outside of his line of vision} the right hook over the top of his left shoulder is something to look out for during the fight -Bute is capable of hurting an opponent with either hand, not just his left.

As was mentioned earlier, Froch was unable to compete with Andre Ward on the inside, because of his distinct lack of in-fighting skills. What is worrying for Froch, is while Ward may be more effective in close than Bute, "Le Tombeur" may actually be more dangerous at this range. Ward is all about smothering and negating on the inside. He is similar to Bernard Hopkins in that regard. Lucian Bute however, is more like that of James Toney in close. Using his "Philly Shell" or half arm cover defense, Bute turns the right shoulder in, looking to deflect punches and create an opening to throw his left uppercut which, I believe to be, is one of the most devastating punches in all of boxing. Carl Froch is the owner of one of boxing's most durable chins, yet I have a feeling it is going to be put to the test on Saturday night.

Even with the hometown advantage, it's difficult to see how Carl Froch wins this fight. I think Bute is the more polished fighter, regardless of the destination of the action. I can see Bute using his superior speed at a distance, outboxing him behind his jab, or using his better craft in close, picking Carl off with short, crisp counters on the inside. I believe Froch's best weapon is his jab, but against Bute, the timing of it has to be perfect, otherwise it's not beyond reason to believe Bute neutralizes the Froch jab early with his right shoulder, and doesn't even allow Froch into the fight. In Froch's favour, he does own a very good uppercut, if he can time it right -Bute's chin has not looked great on the few times it has been dented- and bring the crowd into the fight, then Bute could find himself in the trenches for the first time in his career. We are yet to see how Bute will react to true adversity. On the other hand, we have seen Froch come from behind before.

Realistically though, apart from a few moments here and there, I'm expecting Bute to really cement his status as one of boxing's elite by putting on a tremendous display away from home. Bute is the more accurate puncher, he is faster, he is the better defender and he is the harder hitter -I believe he will be able to master Froch from the outside and on the inside for much of the fight. One other thing...we know Froch's chin is proven, but against Bute? Bute might just be the single hardest puncher Froch has ever faced who has the handspeed and accuracy that enables him to land with regularity.

PREDICTION:

Barring any controversy -namely a shocking home town decision in favour of Froch- I expect Bute to win a comfortable decision and -unlike Ward- even hurt Froch a few times along the way.

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deepwater says:

if froch catches him froch wins. if bute runs then bute wins but wont win any fans

MisterLee says:

I can also see Froch cracking him on the chin, and Bute crumbling. Fighting face first brawlers (andrade, miranda, and johnson) have not prepared Bute to fight a world class boxer puncher who also has a decent ring IQ. If it's a test of chins or will then Froch will win. Bute does not have the skill set to perform wizardry on Froch the way Ward can on ANYONE. Froch outboxed Pascal, and also Jermaine Taylor (AFTER round 6) imo, so he's a better boxer and defensive fighter than pple give him credit for. I'll go on a limb and say Froch, TKO 8th round. Holler!

amayseng says:

just like i predicted ward beating froch handily i am predicting bute knocks him out.

dont know when or where but eventually when bute feels confident he will get the

slow and plodding froch out of there with either a blazing knockout or the ref will

jump in and stop it.

bute is under rated until this deconstruction of froch.

amayseng says:

taylor boxed frochs ears off, froch may have won 2 rounds including the knockout round. froch is far from a world class boxer or puncher.

Grimm says:

Bute is for real, mastering range, quickly shifting his weight/readjusting his position to gain momentum in/for his powershots.

I expect him to keep a low profile for some rounds, let Froch do some initial bullruns for the home crowd (and them english crowds know how to make some noise), and then step it up - finding the range, getting in the rhythm with his jab, and letting that beautiful left go versus body and head.

Froch has reached his roof, can't further maximize his limited skills, and will look more rudimentary than for a long time. All respect to him for what he's achieved, but his footwork and

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balance is on the level with a...well, I don't know what.

Bute stops him around 11-12. No holding back for old friends this time.

ali says:

I think Bute wins by UD. I know Froch has fought better guys but he's never looked good against anybody who could box. His only chance of winning is if he's able to stop Bute or gets a gift decision.

DaveB says:

Can't go against Bute until he faces Ward and I think he will be a tough fight for Ward. Bute by UD. Bute should have been in the Super Six. Oh well, his time is now. Too bad Showtime passed on this one.

CPX says:

Can't believe Showtime passed on this, surely surely will be a brilliant fight, Carl has a very good punchers chance but unless he lands a cracker Bute will run away with the mid and late rounds (Sadly) Go Carl !!!

gibola says:

I think Bute wins on points but I do think Froch is a real live underdog. If Froch can make an impact in the first half of the fight, take something out of Bute and avoid getting hurt himself, even if he's well behind on the cards he can come on in the second half of the fight. If Froch wins it's a late stoppage in a great fight but in all probability Bute on points. I hope Froch wins for his fearless approach to taking tough fights (unlike certain other big name fighters we could mention).

michaelabii says:

I will go out a a limb and say Froch wins this battle of the Super Middles. Now, before y'all crucify me listen to this. I was very concerned the way Bute crumbled against Librado Andrade a few years ago and I believe the same will happen Saturday unless he gets Froch out super early. I think Froch will apply the pressure like no one else has on Bute and I believe Bute will eventually fold in the 11th or 12th. Bute is undeniably the better fighter and can punch but not hard enough to get Froch out of there in the early rounds. Carl has also evolved into an underrated boxer puncher who can box effectively on the backfoot. Bute, in my opinion is an even smoother technician than Ward and I would love to see both Ward and Bute get it on soon. Frankly, I believe those two styles (Ward & Bute) would make for an even better fight. Does anyone know where this fight will be shown ? maybe online somewhere ?

the Roast says:

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I'm with Michaelabii, I cant look at Bute without thinking about that Andrade collapse. It was made better when one of the TSS brothers kept calling him Libido Andrade over and over. I want Froch to win. Love Rachel. Carl wins, Rachel jumps up and down. Bute is a good boxer but I'm not sold yet. Get that chin Carl. I also love how Ameyseng picks against Froch every single time finally getting it right with Ward. Go Frochy!!

teaser says:

Bute outclasses Froch....and hurts him....just too fast and precise...only thing in the way of a Bute win is if his chin isn't up to snuff

BHarper85 says:

I think Bute wins a close decision on the strengths of his boxing ability and great body punching. But I wouldn't be that surprised if Froch pulls it off. Regardless of what happens, how can anyone, at this point, say that Bute is underrated? Sure, he has skills and the "look" of an elite fighter. But he hasn't really fought anyone A-level, or outside of Romania or his adopted home of Quebec. How many guys have been "guaranteed elite superstars" based on their overwhelming skills against lesser competition, and then completely folded in big fights? I'm not saying this is going to happen to Bute, but I won't call him an elite fighter until he CONVINCINGLY beats Froch, which I don't expect.

dino da vinci says:

BHarp85 is right. We've become a little quick with the labeling. It reminds me when a young Roy Jones, Junior was being compared to Sugar Ray Robinson. A writer pointed out, 'You do realize Sugar Ray fought almost as many Hall-of-Famers as Roy has fought opponents with a pulse.'

Go defeat some great fighters first. We'll wait.