Readers, who do ya like in the Trout-Rodriguez (right) fight?

You are not supposed to root for them, or, if you develop a fondness, or a rooting interest in a fighter, you're supposed to keep it to yourself. I say hell with that, dispense with the antiquated norms, be up front with your readers that you are fully human, not a robot, and have biases.

So, I'm saying it...I'm rooting for Delvin Rodriguez in his fight against WBA junior middleweight champion Austin Trout tomorrow night at the Home Dept Center in Carson, CA.

I started taking to Delvin Sr when I shot this video with the boxer and his 9 year-old son Delvin Jr. last December. The little guy showed such immense pride and love in his pop, and the father communicated expertly why he does what he does, why he toils in a bloodsport. I fell for them both.

Rodriguez (age 32; 26-5-3 with 14 KOs; born in the DR, lives in Connecticut) is coming off a draw, and then a UD10 win over Pawel Wolak. The draw was the BWAA 2011 Fight of the Year, and put Rodriguez on a lot more radar screens. He'd been a Friday Night Fights staple, never afraid to take on a stiff challenger in a pick 'em fight for a payday that wouldn't go far towards a college fund for the boy or a retirement account. He's come up the hard way, the warrior's way, the old-school way, and for that I salute him.

I asked Rodriguez to give us his assessment of Trout (age 26; 24-0 with 12 KOs; won WBA belt against Rigoberto Alvarez last February, defended twice, against David Lopez and Frank LoPorto), who has spent less time on TV than Delvin has.

"Trout is a slick fighter, more of a boxer, more of a counterpuncher," Delvin said. "He has good moves but a lack of power. He puts combos together, moves, shows different angles. He looks a little awkward. He's an awkward lefty."

So, how will Delvin fight Trout? "I will put pressure on him in a smart way, not crazy pressure, without technique. I will show angles, will move more than usual, bring the fight to him." You want you to bring it to him? Doesn't he want that, as a counterpucher? "I don't think he will bring it to me, he knows I can hurt him. I think he will feel that in round one."

Delvin says it is more than possible he and Trout will steal the show from the bigger names, like Tarver and Wright, on Saturday.

He appreciates the fans who come up and tell him they like his desire to go up the ladder the old school way. "I do want the best," he said. "It's a business thing, too, though. If I fight someone under me how much money am I going to make? You can't get to the top fighting guys under you, you got to go through other top guys."

This sport can get a little crony-ish at times, a little club-by. If you are with Top Rank or Golden Boy or Al the Ghost, doors might open for you easier than if you are not. "Sure, you have to work a little bit harder," he said. "I take nothing away from my promoter Joe DeGuardia, that's the way it is." I like his serene resignation to the way of the world; no bitching that he isn't as connected as some. He plays the hand dealt to him with intensity, and class.

Yessir, the stakes are as high in the Rodriguez-Trout fight as any on the "Four Warned" card. A win for Delvin or Trout will indeed push that victor into a more high profile bout, a real-deal money bout. "I am calm, but I feel like jumping up and yelling here for this big fight. We both know it will take us to another level in our career. And after I win, would I fight Canelo? Oh yeah, I want a step-up, no easy defense. I want to go to the top want, I want the best out there. I'm not going to become great, and more recognized," Delvin said, "if I don't fight great fighters."

Comment on this article

Radam G says:

I rooting for Delvin. Enough spitted! Holla!

deepwater says:

delvin should win this one.