

Andre Ward Wants Chavez If Chavez Beats Martinez

Written by Raymond Markarian
Friday, 14 September 2012 08:15



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Andre Ward knows how to move in the ring, and captivate a crowd, but he didn't evade the questions we threw at him last night.

Fresh off of the biggest win of his career, Andre Ward reflected on his performance against Chad Dawson, explained why he isn't a complete fighter, and called out the winner of Saturday's big fight between Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. and Sergio Martinez.

RM: Hey Andre, It's been a couple of days after the Dawson fight. How do you feel?

AW: I feel good. My body is a little sore you know, fighting another man in a boxing ring, other than just the small bumps and bruises, I feel good. It was the kind of performance I wanted to put on, my return to HBO, winning in front of my home crowd, and beating a fighter of Chad's caliber, this is the kind of win I was looking for.

RM: Was it everything you expected?

AW: It absolutely was. I am not the type of guy to predict a knockout. A lot of people had things to say about my knockouts. But my response has always been that it is a lot harder to get a stoppage or a knockout at this level, at the world-class level.

RM: Right.

AW: And I am still a young fighter. I am still learning my craft. Actually, the result was better than expected.

RM: I'm sure you saw the punch stats after the fight. Chad Dawson hit you twenty-nine times in ten rounds. What are your thoughts?

AW: Well, a fighter knows what is going on in the ring. I don't know how many times I get hit or how many times I hit my opponent, but I have a pretty good idea. A lot of the shots he landed I got under, I buried, or I blocked. I can probably remember maybe two or three clean punches he

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RM: After the fight, John Scully said Chad Dawson's weight loss and strength coach might have affected Chad's performance. What do you think?

AW: I'm not saying the weight did or did not have an effect on his performance. I just know that it is not my fault if it did. For the last few years, Chad Dawson and his team said they were willing to move down to 168. He even called out the winner of the Super Six. I've never called Chad out. I've never bothered Chad. I've always praised Chad when I was asked about him. But they came looking for me in my weight class. And throughout training camp, even at the press conference, Scully said, the weight is the last thing they are worrying about. I think the best thing to do is give credit where credit is due just like Chad did. It is not a good look for Scully to point blame on the conditioning coach or for the conditioning coach to point blame at Scully. I mean, I was always taught that the head coach is commander-in-chief, no matter who else is a part of the team. The commander-in-chief is the overseer of everything. Whether the weight was an issue or not, the respectful thing to do is what Chad Dawson did. He said, hey, I'm moving back up to 175 and I am going to continue my career. But it is not a good look for Scully to make excuses.

RM: Do you think those excuses are taking away from your victory?

AW: No, I don't think so. Based on how verbal Chad and his team were shows that I earned the victory. I mean I had to cut weight too. I think he said that he weighed about 182 to start camp and I weighed 182. I made a sacrifice like he did. And Chad pushed for the fight at that weight. I think everybody understands that. You might have a few negative comments. But I think I am getting my just due.

RM: I think you are getting the proper respect for the win. There are always some people making excuses in every fight. But as long as Dawson is not saying anything then you are getting the full credit right?

AW: Yeah, I think Chad was still strong in there. He threw strong punches. I think there was more than weight bothering him. I think it had more to do with what I brought to the table.

RM: Yeah.

AW: From the game plan to the strength, to the pressure, to the conditioning. I think it was a combination of what I did that caused Chad to not want to continue.

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RM: Now, do you think the fight would have been different if it took place at 175 pounds?

AW: I don't think so. Maybe there would be less room for excuses afterwards. But I would be a lot stronger at 175 too.

RM: I heard rumors before and after the fight about Edison Miranda apparently knocking down Chad Dawson during sparring. Did you hear anything about that?

AW: Yeah, I saw the article man, just like everybody else. You hear rumors about stuff, but I wasn't in that gym. I don't know what's true. My job is not to focus on rumors. My job is to prepare for the best Chad Dawson. I don't know what they were doing. From what I saw on 24/7, it looked like they were doing great work. As a fighter, I have to go off the visual. I can't listen to that. We heard whispers. But we just stayed focused.

RM: Do you feel more gratification from this victory than any other in your career?

AW: I do. It is not just that we won. It is the way we won. I think that is why I feel vindicated. Some people thought Chad was going to beat me. Some others thought I was going to win by decision. But nobody picked Chad to be stopped. For us to stop Chad Dawson is a major statement in the boxing world.

RM: So do you think all of this talk about Andre's lack of punching power should be stopped now?

AW: Well, I still got a lot of work to do. But I'm not going to come out of myself. And I didn't come out of myself against Chad. I'm telling you, at this level, if you go out looking for a knockout, you are going to find yourself looking at the lights. Because guys that are smart and sharp in this sport will set you up. So, if the knockout comes it comes. If it doesn't it doesn't. The game is about getting your hands raised. You can still be entertaining if you don't get a knockout. So that is what I am going to continue to do. Be entertaining.

RM: Do you feel like you are a complete fighter?

AW: No, I don't think so. You know it was a great fight. I still feel I am 80 or 85 percent. I just have to keep doing what I am doing, just stay dedicated to the sport. I need to keep working on my craft, and continue fighting top-flight competition. I don't think I am at my best yet.

RM: Well, you say you want to keep on working, but what's missing?

AW: I don't think there is anything missing; I just think it takes time.

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RM: Yeah.

AW: I feel like I am approaching my prime. I'm approaching that maturity level in the ring that you can't teach. It just comes with time. You come in to a zone around age 29, 30, 31, when everything starts to slow down. You really start to understand how to fight. I am approaching that. With Chad, things were a lot slower than I anticipated. I've watched Chad for years. He has a couple of inches of reach and height, and I know he has speed, but I saw everything coming.

RM: Some people are calling you the best pound for pound fighter in the world after this fight.

AW: I appreciate it. It is exciting to hear, and it continues to motivate me. It really motivates me. That kind of attention will either cause you to slow down, or pick it up and stay motivated. But I'm not there yet. I'm not the best fighter in the world. I take my hat off to Floyd Mayweather and Manny Pacquiao. Those guys have done it a lot longer than me. They have been at the highest level for a very long time. I respect those guys. I think I am getting close. All I can do is continue doing what I am doing.

RM: How does it feel to come out of a fight without a scratch on your face?

AW: I love it man. It is a beautiful feeling. To be able to win a championship fight against another champion looking close to clean, feels good.

RM: That means you are getting close to being perfect right?

AW: I wish man. But there is always something. And there should be always something. Every time I look at the tape I say, "I have to go back and work on this." I have seen guys have flawless performances in the ring. Bernard Hopkins against Tito Trinidad, Floyd Mayweather against Diego Corrales, Floyd Mayweather against Arturo Gatti, Roy Jones against James Toney. Those are the fights that jump out to you. I don't think the fight with Chad was flawless. But it was a good performance.

RM: Do you think the Carl Froch win and the Super Six was bigger than the win over Chad Dawson?

AW: No, no, no, the Chad Dawson fight was much bigger. I think the Froch fight was 1B and this one was 1A, just based on Chad's credentials, and the event being on HBO.

RM: OK. Do you have any idea what comes next?

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RM: You are keeping a close eye on the Chavez/Martinez fight?

AW: Absolutely, my son has a game on Saturday. But if I have enough time, I might hop on a plane and try to get there that night.

RM: Who do you think is going to win?

AW: Well, it is a pick em' fight. You have the obvious contrast of size and speed with Chavez being the bigger man and Martinez being faster. If Martinez wins, he says I have to come down to 160. There is no way. I'd have to chop off an arm and a leg to get to 160. But Chavez is seemingly outgrowing the middleweight division. And with the name that he has --and the credentials that I have-- I think it would be a blockbuster mega event.

RM: So, if Chavez wins you would want to fight him next?

AW: Oh, I would definitely fight Chavez next. I just think it would be a natural fit. I mean, why not?

RM: Well, what about a move to 175?

AW: I don't think I'd move to 175 for my next fight. I really don't know. In this business all doors are open until they are closed. I think 175 is a few fights down the road. I have to be careful about that because when I go up I am not coming back down. So I don't want to prematurely go up and have to scale back down to 168 for some reason. I definitely want to be a multi-divisional champion in the future.

RM: But, ideally it would be a fight with Chavez around April or May 2013 correct?

AW: That would be ideal. That would give him time to rest. That would give me time to rest. And May 5th, Cinco de Mayo is a great date. I'd love to fight Chavez on Cinco de Mayo. We'll see, I mean, I'm willing to do it. I'd love to fight Martinez too. But I think the weight difference is a problem.

RM: Man, I hear people calling out names and I just want you to clear the air. People on Twitter are calling for you to fight Floyd Mayweather at a catch weight, or Canelo Alvarez. Are either of those fights on your radar?

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TotoyBato says:

I'd like to see Andre vs. B-Hop.

puncher says:

[QUOTE=Editor Mike;19941]



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RM: Right.[br] /[/br]AW: And I am still a young fighter. I am still learning my craft. Actually, the result was better than expected.

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Andre knows what he is saying. He asked Dawson to chop an arm to fight him...but is not willing to chop an arm to fight Martinez. Just want to say hmmm...