

CANELO WILL BEAT MAYWEATHER! Wylie's Mayweather-Canelo Lowdown, Part II

Written by Lee Wylie
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Previously, in the [first installment](#) of this two-part analysis, I examined the preferred techniques of the most scientific fighter in boxing today, Floyd Mayweather. On top of that, I also highlighted some of the ways in which one, namely Saul “Canelo” Alvarez, could potentially scout some of those techniques and look to capitalize on them.

In today’s concluding part, I will be taking one last look at both Mayweather and Canelo, along with going over some of the more strategic and intangible elements of what promises to be the biggest fight of 2013.

Floyd “Money” Mayweather

Mayweather’s single greatest asset, although you wouldn’t believe it judging by the way he acts outside the ring sometimes, is his marvelous analytical mind; only Bernard Hopkins and Juan Manuel Marquez—lesser athletes with considerably less hand and foot speed—are possibly his equals in that regard.

What separates Mayweather from the rest of his peers though, is an ability to tailor his style to suit the opponent’s by making on the fly adjustments throughout the course of a bout—he improvised brilliantly against Miguel Cotto and Robert Guerrero, using uppercuts to exploit the Puerto Rican’s forward leaning stance and by throwing looping right hooks (considered a fundamental no-no for an orthodox fighter) around the Ghost’s guard after pre-conditioning him to narrow it with straight rights down the middle.

A master of the fundamentals, Floyd’s genius lies in his ability to marry fairly basic boxing techniques with elite-level timing. Take his right hand lead for example; where most trainers will

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advocate that the jab is the nucleus of a well-rounded offensive/defensive game, Mayweather has crafted a career out of neutralizing and subduing his adversaries (both orthodox and southpaw) with little more than his right hand lead.

Fighting with an out-of-sync, scattered rhythm that would throw off a metronome, Floyd times his opponent's steps and then catches them in-between steps with a hard right, before immediately looking to either tie-up or angle off to avoid being hit with counters. Floyd's creativity and variation even with the most rudimentary of tools is a sight to behold. As Sun Tzu stated in his *Art of War*, the orthodox and the unorthodox revolve around each other.

Mayweather also has a superb command of range and knows precisely what tools are available or unavailable to both him and his opponents depending on the range they are in—it's one of the reasons you'll see Floyd using different guards after transitioning between ranges.

While he is known as a defensive fighter first and foremost, Floyd is as offensively gifted as anyone in the sport. He is superb at setting traps and creating false patterns by looking to establish a pattern of attacking one target for a period of time before suddenly switching the attack to another.

Although he rarely searches for the knockout, Floyd still punches with enough venom and conviction to prevent his opponent from attacking him without fear of what may come back.

To say Canelo is going to have his work cut out for him would be a gross understatement.

Saul "Canelo" Alvarez

Technically speaking, Canelo does most things very well and is much underrated. Unexpectedly fast and with considerable punching power, Canelo can counter and lead with equal aptitude, and has a variety of precise power punches at his disposal that he can unleash from both hands. He possesses a strong stiff jab, excellent uppercuts from both hands (although Floyd's backward leaning stance could make them redundant in this fight), a dexterous left hook (especially to the body and when hooking off his jab) and a deadly right cross that he can throw

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either as a lead, behind his jab as part of a combination, or as a pre-emptive counter over the top of the opponent's jab.

Comfortable at all ranges, Canelo is probably at his best working at mid-range when throwing his imaginative combinations. Once he cuts loose, his combination punching (particularly when his combinations flow from counters) is of the highest order. Canelo is also highly proficient at setting up counters off of leads by slipping or rolling to the left or right immediately following his jab or straight right.

Although I wouldn't label Canelo a technician on the inside, he clearly knows many of the range's subtle nuances and can create some wonderful punching angles at close quarters (angling toward his opponent's lead side to set up left hooks from an outside angle etc.).

Canelo is by no means on Mayweather's level when it comes to making his opponent miss, but one can clearly see that he has progressed defensively—during the Austin Trout fight, we saw a full array of parrying, slipping and weaving techniques, not to mention an improved ability to roll with the opponent's punches. Over the course of his last five fights, he has become a lot more practical and methodical with his offense too. He is certainly a far more cerebral fighter these days.

In addition to everything else, Canelo is also a tremendous finisher once he has his opponent reeling.

The question, then, is does Canelo have what it takes to pull off the upset against the consensus world's best fighter and shock the boxing universe?

Yes, I believe he does, but it won't be easy.

Here's what he'll need to do:

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Tactical considerations

In today's game, no other fighter gauges distance, observes angles and singles out the techniques that are most likely to be used by his opponents any better than Mayweather.

While this obviously has a great deal to do with his fine appreciation of timing and distance, it also has a lot to do with the fact that the vast majority of Mayweather's opponents were tactically inept—attacking him at the wrong range at specifically the wrong time and with the incorrect tools.

Therefore, it is important that Canelo doesn't simply follow suit and play directly into Floyd's hands by allowing him to dictate the pace and geography of the fight. Basic techniques will not land with any regularity on Floyd unless Canelo can do something that will force Floyd into opening up on HIS (Canelo's) terms. Canelo has got to try and disrupt Floyd's timing and draw out predictable responses; he will accomplish this by working behind a jab, using lots of head and upper body movement, and with feints.

If Floyd is looking to stick and move, Canelo will likely be forced into pressing the attack and will have to cut off the ring. Should Canelo try to pressure Floyd without setting his attack up first or without doing anything to disrupt Floyd's rhythm, he will end up walking into traps all night long. In this scenario, Canelo must apply steady, educated pressure without overcommitting. Reckless aggression won't beat Floyd.

The Jab is boxing's most functional weapon; it can nullify speed, manage distance or it can disturb rhythm. Therefore, Canelo **MUST** use the jab to its full capacity. Floyd may be exceptional at evading and countering regular jabs, but I personally believe he may be accessible to stiff jabs aimed at his body, chest and lead shoulder like the ones Oscar De La Hoya was subduing him with during the seventh round of their contest (round seven was arguably Oscar's best).

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