

Roach Talks About Cotto-Sergio, Pt I

Written by Michael Woods

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Fight fans in the NYC area, and beyond, are wanting the i's to be dotted and the t's crossed, and the announcement to be made already. They know that a June 7 clash at the Madison Square Garden big room between Sergio Martinez, the Argentine heart-breaker who always makes for exciting fights, because of a tendency to have fun, and drop his hands, and Puerto Rican jewel Miguel Cotto is a can't miss rumble.

Lou DiBella will co-promote with Top Rank and Bob Arum, as Sergio's handler. I asked the New York based dealmaker where the fight stands. "Ask Cotto and Top Rank," he said. "The holdup's not on our end." So I did.

Is Cotto-Martinez close, Bob?

"That's gonna happen," Arum said.

"The deal is still not in place," said Cotto advisor Gaby Penagaricano to me. "Although we are very close."

The 33-year-old Cotto, no stranger to trainer musical chairs, will again be trained by Freddie Roach; the two seemed to jell nicely in their first waltz together, for an Oct. 5 tangle against Delvin Rodriguez.

Cotto looked nastier, quicker of hand and foot and more sold on using his sharp left hook than

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we'd seen previously...

I asked Freddie what would happen if and when Cotto gets in with Martinez, who last fought in April 2013 (UD12 win over Martin Murray), and turns 39 on Feb. 21. The trainer told me that Cotto will attend Pacman's next bout, and then training will begin the day after.

"Martinez may be on the downside, but still has a lot of speed, is still a very capable guy," he said. "He's never been a great fighter, he's always been a great athlete. I wouldn't call him a great boxer. I think Cotto's boxing ability will just overwhelm Sergio, with Cotto in shape. Me and Cotto worked so well together the first fight together. He has a lot of respect for me and the program we had was really, really good. And we're gonna do that again.

"Going in to the Rodriguez fight, I said, 'Who the eff picked this guy to fight, he's an awkward guy.' But he followed the plan so well, he made it look easy." But, as I noted to Roach, after Cotto blew out Delvin, some smartypantses came out and said that Delvin was a bum, and the fight proved nothing. The trainer said that the win was meaningful, because it shows what Cotto in shape can do, and what they can do as a team.

"Miguel told me, if he was in that kind of shape for Mayweather, he would have beat Mayweather," Roach said.

Check back for more from Roach on Cotto's plan to beat Sergio.

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