

Froch-Groves II Will Pack Wembley, Settle The Score

Written by Robbi Paterson
Thursday, 20 March 2014 08:55



Just over two weeks ago a historic deal was announced for these two pugilists, Carl Froch (34-2, 23 KOs), the WBA/IBF super-middleweight champion, and George Groves (20-1, 15 KOs), to finally sort out their differences inside a 90,000, "blood red," seated stadium.

The anticipation for the May 31 rematch has obviously overwhelmed not just the boxing aficionados, but also people with very little interest in the sport at all, many of whom will never have seen a live boxing match of notable significance in their lives - that's until they meet their date with destiny.

Matchroom's Eddie Hearn, the promoter of the event, has pulled off a serious coup regarding the live gate attendance for the event. It would be perfectly legit to say he hasn't vaulted ticket sales through the retractable Wembley roof, but rather he's blown it off completely after detonating the semtex with a blasting cap. 60,000 tickets were shifted inside an hour. Sky TV are predicting Box Office pay-per-view buys to hit a million, potentially worth in the region of £17m. The broadcasting rights have gone international to an absurd degree, as over 100 countries are set up for transmission.

Eddie, the dark haired and charming boxing salesman, has went one better than his dad, Barry, who managed to get a figured amount of around 44,000 into Old Trafford for the WBC/WBO super-middleweight title rematch between Chris Eubank and Nigel Benn, 21 years ago. On May 31, after streaming out of the London Underground, jumping out parked cars, or by whatever means necessary regarding transport to the battle, thousands upon thousands of intense spectators, young and old - some having just drowned themselves profusely in large proportions of alcohol while others simply walk in a straight line - will eagerly swagger along Wembley Way

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towards a stadium befitting of a 21st century clash between two Roman Gladiators.

At the present time, if you don't suffer from a severe and debilitating case of long-term memory loss, as you very well know, they sure aren't Romans. Froch, 36, is from the city of Nottingham, with Groves, 25, being a Londoner.

However, these two gladiators won't stand and trade lunatically until a sure death occurs. Intentional headbutts and low blows aside, their physical confrontation will be conducted in a professional and dignified manner - hopefully. They'll both warm-up in their respective dressing rooms, get each fist bandaged and gloved by a member of their training camps to the formulated Marquess of Queensberry Rules, then march themselves towards a squared ring for a possible thirty-six minutes of extreme violence.

They'll both meet centre ring, producing a mirrored symmetry image as they stare intently into each others' eyes, touch gloves, retreat to their corners, and get ready to physically catapult at each other, wholeheartedly, while seeking a high degree of finessed skill and toughness: spiteful jabs, millisecond feints, rocket launching right hands, rib evaporating body punches, combined with durability in equal measures as a Siberian Larch made church. Hold on... Many Siberian Larch - referred to as "The Tree of Eternity" - made churches have ultimately been standing in existence for over 800 years, whereas Froch's chin lasted a mere two minutes and forty-two seconds against Groves during their first encounter.

His guard down, balance all over the place, rushing forward, straight up and down as a lampost, Froch handed over his nickname, "The Cobra," to the awaiting Groves, who simply said, "thank you very much," before taking a slight step back and flooring the champion, heavily, with a straight right hand down the pipe.

Froch's relatively limited defense throughout the course of his career couldn't have been termed as even "frail," because it would suffice to say it never existed during those alarming moments. If it wasn't for the sounding of a bell, well, Froch might well have been saved by the referee instead. Thereafter.....Groves, exuding confidence, was springing forward with authoritative, free flowing, jabs. Very rarely did he miss the target with his purposeful offense. As was the case during the first round, his right hand - the punch Groves would later say had Froch "buzzed" on numerous occasions - would go on to become a regular and useful weapon against his slower campatriot throughout the contest.

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During round four, technical deficiencies of the champion were evidently there in abundance, again. Groves launched a right hand from long range which, realistically, shouldn't have found its target. Froch pulling back in a straight line, hands down, wearing concrete boots, almost invited the punch to land on his chin, making no attempt to either slip it with head movement or quickly step to the side and counter-punch. Froch was physically tight and tentative. His jab, usually a ramrod, was so soft it would've struggled to awaken a light sleeper had it hit one's bedroom door.

Throughout the vast majority of the contest, especially the early rounds, Groves showed that he wouldn't voluntarily back pedal, which obviously would've allowed the champion to gain momentum with his two-fisted attacks. Lucian Bute showed that backing away from Froch can lead to catastrophic consequences - he was mercilessly steamrolled inside 3 rounds. Groves was always within distance, solidly balanced, defense tight, picking his moments to either lead off or counter, making Froch unsure in almost everything he attempted. Yes, Froch did have his moments during rounds seven and eight but he was barely, if ever, significantly impressive with his work.

After eight completed rounds, Groves was certainly ahead - out thinking, out boxing and out punching the champion. When the controversial stoppage came in favor of the champion, it was a surprising one, as Groves was well balanced with his punching technique undamaged, too. Fighters who are totally "gone" and need to be saved by the referee rarely, if ever, deliver any ability of being able to fire back at their opponent with solid punching technique, which Groves showed seconds before the stoppage. See, it's not about how many blows to the head or body a fighter receives which should determine the conclusion of a stoppage. First and foremost, well, to a certain degree, it's paramountly the state of the fighter's consciousness and physical well being.

My mind is cast back to the McCullough-Larios rematch in Las Vegas a few years ago, when Dr. Margaret Goodman stopped the fight before the start of the last round. Goodman, a highly respected ring physician in Nevada at the time, thought McCullough had sustained far too many powerful punches over the duration of the fight, even though he never looked seriously hurt or close to being knocked down.

Was Groves hurt? Yes, slightly. But his consciousness wasn't ripped away from his soul enough for a stoppage to be forced by referee Howard Foster. He was given neither the chance to recuperate himself nor the opportunity to be accurately assessed by the referee.

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Before the referee jumped in to stop the fight, Froch was definitely the fighter with all the momentum on his side. Yes. But, in my opinion, had he been allowed to continue, who's to say Groves wouldn't have knocked Froch out with a single blow for a full 10 count just a handful of seconds after the exact point when the referee halted the contest?

The IBF - who forced the rematch - statement from Jan. 24: "The panel felt that in the ninth round Groves should have been allowed to continue as he did not appear to be seriously hurt and was counter-punching and attempting to move the action away from the ropes at the time of the stoppage. In addition, the referee waved off the fight from behind Groves instead of in front of him and did not look into his eyes. Groves showed no signs of being hurt after the stoppage. The panel felt it was an improper stoppage... it has been determined that there was inappropriate conduct by the referee that affected the outcome of the fight."

If Froch allows the younger Groves to dilute his confidence so thoroughly with psychological mind games during the build-up to the rematch that his decision making is, yet again, amateurish and obscured when he steps into the ring, his faculties might well end up being scattered over the canvas, only this time, like a dead man's ashes.

The volcanic feud: The gas started to simmer during a heated sparring session between the pair at a Sheffield gym in 2010. It manifested itself to boiling point when Froch controversially stopped Groves last November in Manchester - after nine rounds of fistic mayhem. At Wembley Stadium, London, on May. 31, the inevitable eruption of lava might well conclude proceedings once and for all.

Robbi Paterson is a feature writer/analyst who has contributed to various boxing websites, including TheSweetScience.com.

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The Commish says:

Can't wait for the rematch. This one already is a candidate for "Fight of the Year." You just know it. Wondering who the referee will be this time around?

-Randy G.

deepwater2 says:

Looking forward to it. Who says boxing is dead? 80000 is a great number. I think froch was overconfident for the first bout. He got caught early. Froch is a tough bastard and has heart. He will be prepared this time. I'm picking froch by ko.

The Shadow says:

Skibbz, if I make it over there for that fight, do you wanna hit the town, snatch some honeys and then hit the gym the next day?

The Commish says:

I think I'm buying the overconfidence thang, Deep. Froch is gonna' be ready for whatever Groves can throw at him, and it will be plenty. Really looking forward to the fight...just don't want to see overweight ref HJ Foster in there again!

-Randy G.

The Shadow says:

By the way, Froch wins this by will. Groves is a better fighter. However he is an insecure man who is taking total solace in the fact that the referee "screwed" him.

He seems to totally disregard the fact that Froch was hurting him from round 7 on, steadily building towards a crushing crescendo with his willful charges. If it hadn't happened in 9, it would've happened in 10. I'm sure of it. Whether Groves admits it unlucky or not, if he doesn't truly grasp this, he's in big trouble.

He may get depressed and lose more hair. I kid you not.

Skibbz says:

Won't need to be doing any snatching Skibbz got them lining up!! Groves has full trust in his trainer fitzpatrick (Although this wasn't initially the case) and I think that will help him a lot. What's incredible is that although he won over so many new fans that night, he is still somewhat the underdog going into this fight. I think that says a lot about the public's perception of Froch.

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That being said I think Groves will be more confident than Froch on the night, and indeed in the run up. He solved a rubix cube in the press conference whilst Froch was speaking, Froch would refuse to look at him until some words pricked him enough to shove Groves aside during a brief face-off. This fight is in St GG's backyard and all the talk in the dens and inns is that the title will be staying in the capital!

Also as people mentioned, 60k tickets sold within an hour, with another 20k planned to go on sale.. Who said boxing was dying?!

Grimm says:

@Skibbz. I'm leaning towards your man.

Froch never wanted this. He was supposed to run thru GG - I mean stumble, in his unique style with less-than-average correlation between bodyparts - in a pretty high profile but pretty low risk fight, on the way to bigger stages. Didn't turn out that way, and by no means did GG at any time during the fight give the impression that he was intimidated or impressed with Froch. Hurt, yes - as was Froch, and as had Froch huge problems protecting himself from those faster and more accurate hands that kept landing on his chin.

Lack of preparation on Frochs behalf? Maybe. Overconfidence? Probably. But at the end of the day, it wasn't shape or ignorance that made him look like an open book waiting to be closed. GG simply had the keys, but got too eager. It's up to him. He still has the keys. Fight the smart fight, and the giant shall fall.

The Shadow says:

[QUOTE=Skibbz;46299]Won't need to be doing any snatching Skibbz got them lining up!! Groves has full trust in his trainer fitzpatrick (Although this wasn't initially the case) and I think that will help him a lot. What's incredible is that although he won over so many new fans that night, he is still somewhat the underdog going into this fight. I think that says a lot about the public's perception of Froch. That being said I think Groves will be more confident than Froch on the night, and indeed in the run up. He solved a rubix cube in the press conference whilst Froch was speaking, Froch would refuse to look at him until some words pricked him enough to shove Groves aside during a brief face-off. This fight is in St GG's backyard and all the talk in the dens and inns is that the title will be staying in the capital!

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I disagree Shadow, Groves is supremely confident - don't be fooled by his babyish face and calm demeanor. He is ready to drop Froch again and I think he will do it! He was told not to press the advantage too hard against Froch and become reckless so he eased off slightly even after the knockdown. I don't think they'll take the same cautious approach the second time around![/QUOTE]

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That's exactly what I'm saying. I'm not fooled by anything at all. Dude can fight.

What I mean is the guy is so confident that he sounds like he's bordering on delusional. He was getting tore up in the last few rounds. Unless he acknowledges and addresses that in training camp, he's in for a ride awakening.

And if you line them up, oh boy, hahaha, I will be there!

flackoguapo says:

Hey Shadow, can you break down what you mean about Groves addressing getting tore up the last few rounds? What type of adjustments are you thinking of?

I think Groves can outbox Froch and really use his legs in the later rounds after putting in clean work. The distance that Froch was trying to box Groves at was all wrong IMO. He is too sloppy when he punches from the outside and ends up in no mans land with his footwork all tangled up. I really do think it's just a bad match-up for Froch but he does have the chin, grit and savvy to knock dude out again.

The Shadow says:

[QUOTE=flackoguapo;46341]Hey Shadow, can you break down what you mean about Groves addressing getting tore up the last few rounds? What type of adjustments are you thinking of?

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Yes, I'd be glad to.

With my psychology background, I naturally like to look beyond words and get an idea of his paradigm. When getting a gauge on a guy's paradigm -- mental thoughts, opinions, patterns, values, interpretations and so forth -- I specifically like to look for the consistent message.

What I see with Groves is that he consistently repeats that he systematically beat up Froch from round one to nine. "There is nothing positive Carl can take from the last fight."

Which I don't think is true.

In spite of this, Groves repeats his conviction to the point where I really think he believes it. Now, Groves is quite skillful at mind games so I could also see the plausibility of this being a tactic to frustrate Froch.

That said, his actions, behavior, body language etc. after the fight suggests to me that he truly deep in his heart feels he was destroying Froch the whole time.

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So if he, blinded by his superior technique and huge confidence, decides to ignore that, he's going to go in there thinking that he stops or completely dominates Carl Froch this time around.

And if he does think that, he's going to be in trouble. Because Carl Froch's will and competitive drive is as big as anything in sports today.

I think that is what has driven this subpar athlete and mediocrely talented boxer to the heights that he has. And it will be enough to dwarf an overconfident fighter with a illusory interpretation of what happened the last time around.

Hope that makes sense somewhat?

Skibbz says:

But in my opinion he has definite reason to be confident. I had him winning 7 of the first 8 rounds in their fight, with a knock down in the first. He was cruising to the victory. He got a little sloppy in the 8th but quickly got it back together and won the round for me. He got caught by a few flush shots which hurt him but the fight was stopped very premature in my opinion. Groves out boxed him, he was landing the right hand at will (although personally I wouldn't have had him looking for it as much as he was... But if it wasn't missing then...) and the left hook wasn't having a bad night either. Froch raised his arms like a spoilt child claiming victory for something he didn't deserve. Groves will have his redemption!

flackoguapo says:

[QUOTE=Skibbz;46349]But in my opinion he has definite reason to be confident. I had him winning 7 of the first 8 rounds in their fight, with a knock down in the first. He was cruising to the victory. He got a little sloppy in the 8th but quickly got it back together and won the round for me. He got caught by a few flush shots which hurt him but the fight was stopped very premature in my opinion. Groves out boxed him, he was landing the right hand at will (although personally I wouldn't have had him looking for it as much as he was... But if it wasn't missing then...) and the left hook wasn't having a bad night either. Froch raised his arms like a spoilt child claiming victory for something he didn't deserve. Groves will have his redemption![/QUOTE]

Nice Breakdown... Do you think Groves will become too predictable by throwing that many right hands? I agree with everything you said but Groves was striking gold with a lot of counter combos.. It just showed he was confident in what he was throwing but he got caught. Props to Froch for being a soldier and biting down when he smelled a little bit of blood. He was getting touched up ,BAD.

The Shadow says:

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Of course he has reason to be confident. But if he thinks he was in complete control when he wasn't, his overconfidence could hurt him.

amayseng says:

I think Groves takes care of him this time.

First fight was great

The Commish says:

I am flopping on this one faster than a 42nd Street hooker. One day it's Froch, the next it's Groves. Can't make up my mind on this one. This happens plenty to me. All of a sudden a light goes on and I make a pick--and live with it. Right now, I can't. Gonna' have to head over to the Boxing Channel & see what they've got up there for CF & GG.

See ya' later...got some flip-flopping to do!

-Randy G.

deepwater2 says:

[QUOTE=The Commish;46366]I am flopping on this one faster than a 42nd Street hooker. One day it's Froch, the next it's Groves. Can't make up my mind on this one. This happens plenty to me. All of a sudden a light goes on and I make a pick--and live with it. Right now, I can't.

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-Randy G.[/QUOTE]

I'm not flopping . Froch all the way. Froch has the odds against him all the time and doesn't give up and keeps trying. He is a proven commodity. Kessler ,Taylor , even in the loss to ward he kept trying. There is no quit in froch. Groves had a great first half of a fight against froch but folded. Unless froch has too many miles or got old overnight I see him getting a stoppage win in this one. He beat up groves in sparring and came in overconfident last time out. He learned and should be prepared this time. Froch closes the show. Let Smoger be the ref and let it go.

amayseng says:

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Def put Smoger in there.

This is such a great matchup, the first was an exciting war.

Plenty of good exciting fights coming up

pac vs bradley

sergio vs cotto

ggg possibly in July against a Jr

Add in froch vs groves.

then you have Floyd vs MM, eh. damn it Floyd challenge yourself

kidcanvas says:

yea this is one ive been waiting for , carl got owned in the last one and got a gift... this can go any way ..its one of those

deepwater2 says:

Mm deserves it more then china chin khan Because of the beating he gave to boner . PAC vs Floyd is the biggest matchup and most money

amayseng says:

I def agree with MM getting the nod, he at least goes for it. However, floyd should be facing pac. no excuses

Skibbz says:

I challenge you guys to watch the fight again! By round 9 I had groves up 7-1 + a knockdown. Froch caught him and Groves defended the only way he knew how. Fitzpatrick tried working that a lot but sometimes in the fight you revert back to old ways.. But stopping a guy so far ahead in the biggest fight of his career was a bad call imo. He deserved his shot and he was winning by a clear mile. Groves will hopefully be working more on his inside fighting because it wasn't great on the night, and will come to land the right hand and left hook a lot more.

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I cant remember exactly the score but I had Groves winning as well.

The stoppage was definitely early, I bitched about it on here for a week.

flackoguapo says:

[QUOTE=The Shadow;46347]Yes, I'd be glad to.

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And if he does think that, he's going to be in trouble. Because Carl Froch's will and competitive drive is as big as anything in sports today.

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I get what you are saying. Groves thinks that he can beat Froch by not changing anything. Do

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you learn more about a guy in that aspect pre or post fight?

one thing I did not like AT ALL about Groves is that he seemed to get real gun shy when Froch landed that loopy right hand he shot from the hip. It's expected, but Froch was charging in with his hands down and Groves should have been more aggressive IMO. If he really wasn't hurt like he said he wasn't then he should have fired back. I am no one to question someones character, but I like to see a guy with fire in their belly when the opportunity presents itself.

the Roast says:

I wish the United States could fill stadiums and arenas like the rest of the world does for boxing. I don't know what is wrong with the people here. I'd love to be at Wembley for this one. The fans will blow the roof off the place. I like Froch to win a close UD.

Skibbz says:

Groves legs softened up briefly... Froch never let up the pressure.. But the ref never gave St GG a chance to return fire.. He has just started to push Froch backwards when the fight was stopped. The only thing Groves can do is make Froch taste some vengeance in second fight. Yeah it's a great story for british boxing that we can fill the biggest house in less than an hour!