

Picking The Winner Of Cotto-Martinez Isn't A Forgone Conclusion

Written by Frank Lotierzo

Thursday, 20 February 2014 10:15



Wladimir Klitschko versus any heavyweight in the top-10, is there really any doubt as to the outcome? No.

Floyd Mayweather versus the opponents of his choice, no there's not a shred of drama or doubt as to who'll win.

Gennady Golovkin versus any of the top middleweights in the world, no, we know who's probably gonna win, it's just a matter of in what round the fight will end.

And believe me, that's not an indictment on any of the three fighters mentioned. The truth of the matter is, today's heavyweight division is extremely pedestrian and Wladimir brings a lot to the ring as a fighter and is no walk in the park.

Mayweather is an authentically great fighter who must retire undefeated (or he'll be most remembered for his lone loss) and happens to be the most risk averse great we've ever seen, at least in my lifetime. His greatness limits the pool as to who can really challenge him, and the two or three fighters near his weight who could challenge him, Manny Pacquiao, Sergio Martinez and Gennady Golovkin, he won't fight without a gimmick or stipulation that tilts the result in his favor.

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As for Golovkin, the middleweight division isn't pedestrian, but a lot of contenders from the 1970s/1980s would definitely be a major belt holder today. So in reality, Golovkin isn't necessarily running on the fastest track either.

The point is, recently we've seen the bigger name fighters who are on everybody's radar partake in a lot of mismatches. How many times is a major fight announced that you don't know right off the bat who the winner will be? Or at the least there's an overwhelming case to build for one fighter over the other. And for that reason boxing fans should welcome the upcoming middleweight bout on June 7th between WBC title holder Sergio Martinez 51-2-2 (28) and three division title holder Miguel Cotto 38-4 (31).

What a welcome change it is to see that a major fight is taking place and picking the winner is very tough and by no means a forgone conclusion. There is a case to be made for both sides. The case for Cotto is, I get the sense that Martinez is not quite there physically anymore having been down in his last three fights. He's had too many close calls in his last few fights versus fighters who aren't technically solid and he can be trapped on the ropes, which will get you hurt against Cotto. He may look good early, but how long can he last? If Martinez's legs aren't 100% (and I don't think they are anymore) he's lost his biggest advantage in the fight. Martinez without his legs isn't really Martinez and will be forced to fight it out and trade on the inside, advantage Cotto.

The case for Martinez is, he still may have his legs and will be able to pot-shot Cotto on the way in. Miguel is very durable but he tends to swell up and cut. In order for Cotto to win he has to force the fight without getting peppered with Martinez's unorthodox punches from his southpaw stance. Cotto has gone rounds with fighters who were bigger punchers than Martinez, but Sergio is very accurate when the target is pursuing him. And if he makes Cotto pay a steep price on the way in, especially in the early going, that'll certainly impede Cotto's aggression - and once that happens, Cotto isn't nearly as effective as he normally is when he's pushing the fight.

As for the size, you could look at it two ways. The first being that Martinez is the bigger guy and has been in there with big middleweights like Kelly Pavlik and Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. and wasn't manhandled or pushed around the ring. Sergio isn't the strongest middleweight around, but he's definitely stronger than he appears. The other side of the coin pertaining to their size is that Martinez isn't a genuine middleweight and used to fight as a big welterweight/junior middleweight. The catch-weight of 159 isn't a big deal this time because Martinez usually comes in under the middleweight limit. So basically, the size and weight isn't really much of a factor. If pushed to choose who the weight favors more, I'd say Martinez because he is definitely

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the bigger man, but he doesn't really fight like a big strong middleweight.

Another thing that makes the fight intriguing is, both fighters have a very strong mental constitution and cannot be convinced that they're out of a fight because they've been beaten up or lost a few rounds. Both Martinez and Cotto have rescued fights where it looked as though it might not be their night. And there's not an ounce of dog in either fighter and both will be around until someone else stops it. The Martinez-Cotto clash is one fight that boxing fans should embrace. What a pleasure the promotion is going to be--two adults, two professionals, no name calling, no bullsh*t. Both Martinez and Cotto are real pros and represent all that's good about professional boxing.

Not only are both guys upper-tier world class fighters who have never backed away from a challenge, they're both fighting to become the next leading contender in the Floyd Mayweather sweepstakes. Cotto has made more money than Martinez, but no doubt wants another shot at Mayweather and the pot of financial gold that comes along with it. As for Martinez, he would love to get a shot at Mayweather for both the notoriety and fame along with the money that fighting Floyd brings.

I have no doubt both fighters will be very motivated to face each other for all the above reasons. And you can bet that Mayweather will be scouting both guys as he looks to find a viable opponent to meet later this year. The only sad thing about that is, we already know Floyd can beat Cotto, and if Martinez wins, Mayweather will not face Sergio at 159, because that would make the bout legitimate. No way Mayweather will go for that. I'm thinking if we get Mayweather-Martinez, Floyd will insist that the catch-weight is somewhere in the vicinity of 154/155. Which of course means we will again know the outcome before the ink dries on the contracts.

Sigh....

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amayseng says:

Yep very intriguing matchup...

I can only recall the cotto vs trout match....

Can Roach make the difference for Cotto or will Sergio be well rested and slice and dice him up in a clinic?

I am sticking with a rested and rehabbed Sergio putting on a great performance...

deepwater2 says:

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Tight matchup. I want to say Sergio but.... Chavez jr took something out of him . Martin Murray beat him up in a soccer stadium in Argentina so cotto has all advantages at MSG on pr parade weekend. If Sergio can't stop him in 8 cotto wins. The crowd will love every jab cotto throws even if it doesn't land . Cotto will be healthy and full at 159. Sergio will be a little off with losing weight . I think cotto negotiated ring size ,weight,billing, ect ect . I want to pick Sergio but I can't .Cotto brings the most money in this matchup. Sparring PAC will help cotto with footwork and speed. Cotto gets the close win ..even if Sergio deserves it.

Shoulder Roll Defense says:

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I agree, Sergio should win rather easily if he is close to being completely healthy. A healthy Martinez is slick, fast, mobile, and naturally the bigger man. Cotto is naturally a southpaw and

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should neutralize the southpaw angle advantage by fighting out of the orthodox stance.

Radam G says:

It will not be a walk in the park. Sergio Martinez, at his best, couldn't work Miguel Cotto over. SM has mostly been a biteness bark.

MC's problems has been trainers having him fight the wrong fight. With Top-Gun Coach No Joke Freddie Roach, MC is in da hizouse! And he is going to make SM into a mouse. The trap is set. And SM is going to to bite off the cheese, I bet. And he will suffer from injuries yet. He is all wet.

I'm putting my money on MC becoming the first four-division champion of Rican descent. SM will have another injury incident. But a healthy him couldn't beat MC in my humble opinion. Holla!

Grimm says:

Agree, and definitely with him having fought the wrong fights. Beyond being better preserved, Cotto knows geometry in the ring better than most - if any - of the men Martinez' have met, and in close quarters got the tools to do the job. I got great respect for Martinez, though. This is the sort of fight where I wish there could be two winners.

the Roast says:

This is a rare fight that IS PPV worthy. Both fan favorites, well respected Champions with long careers. Cotto sees an opportunity to make history by grabbing the middleweight championship against a smallish Champ and he is going for it. I wonder why Floyd didn't seize this same opportunity against a smaller type Champ. I always wondered why Oscar didn't fight Jermain Taylor for history instead of fighting Pac. I think Cotto will get Sergio out of there by KO. The Cotto who was guns blazing vs Floyd and the last fight gets the job done. If Cotto trys to wait and box like the Trout fight he will lose.

Radam G says:

Big Money Oscar fought for the prize against Da Manny, not for the pride against Jermaine "Over-hyped" Taylor. M Cotto is doing it for the prize and the pride is just riding shotgun. Holla!

King Beef says:

Should be à interesting fight, although i gotta give the edge to Cotto; . Serg's best days seem alittle further behind him.

Carmine Cas says:

The catch weight shouldn't be a problem at all he's come in at 157 and 158. It's his age and

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body, the rest should help him but we'll. It's not going to be an easy fight for either of them. If Sergio can't move he's done, but he might be able to outlast Miguel and cut him up too. I love and hate this fight, two of my favorite fighters squaring off lol.

stormcentre says:

[QUOTE=the Roast;44232] I always wondered why Oscar didn't fight Jermain Taylor for history instead of fighting Pac. [/QUOTE]

As far as why golden girl didn't fight Jermain Taylor; I may be able to help out with an answer there.

I think you will find that since Oscar ate a fair amount of leather and laid down in front of B-Hop and the thousands in attendance at the MGM, he didn't really want any part of a fully blown middleweight that had already beaten and/or given B-Hop a good run.

Oscar hadn't been that pushed in his career ever before.

Take a look at how dejected and totally clueless Oscar was in there against B-Hop, particularly after the 4th round when he knew Bernard was playing him. He was lost and unconfident and worrying about his looks.

Props for Oscar taking that fight, but Strum had already taken something out of Oscar beforehand so it wasn't like he was going in thinking this is my weight.

Then, once in there with the Executioner Hopkins took Oscar's right cross away, Oscar also had no answer for Bernard's defence, and then when De-LaHoya's jab started to not command respect; Oscar started thinking for ways out.

As soon as he wasn't committing to his shots the old fox knew. So did Oscar.

Then came the body shot that if you replay it, is in my humble opinion, not really the kind of shot that should have had the effect on Oscar - or a marquee level fighter. Particularly given he didn't look absolutely exhausted when he took it.

Psychologically yes, physically no. Still the lines between them are blurred and always mobile in the ring.

Yes, I know some body shots can drop you. But to me, it looked like Oscar laid down and that - for the first time - he didn't love the camera scrutinizing him after a fight.

Oscar knew he wasn't really a middleweight then. And he knew he learned that with Strum.

Hopkins sealed the deal.

So, he wasn't going to get in there and confidently boogie with someone that handled the guy

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that dropped him and made him publicly lay down so much that he gave them a lifetime job at GBP - to prevent the years of ridicule that could have resulted.

Oh, did I mention that Taylor also had fast hands? Never a good idea to fight out of your weight division (up) with guys that have fast hands; until your well adjusted. And Jermain's chin deficit hadn't manifested itself by then either, so it's not like there was an upside to Jermain (from Oscar's perspective) after being flogged by Bernard.

Funny thing is, Oscar probably thought by picking on the smaller guys like Pacman he'd be safer and would steamroll through - since that happened to him with B-Hop.

Only thing was, by the time Oscar and HBO 24/7 got to the Pacquiao juggernaut; it had only just started its welterweight engine and they had lost nothing of the speed and power associated with their lighter weight performances.

I say nothing of artificial assistance, not with Pacquiao or Oscar.

Anyway, Pacquiao was just too much for a guy that hadn't made welterweight for years, was not in the gym all the time and usually enjoyed cream biscuits with a cappuccino whilst lounging back late at night in his silk night gown watching Letterman.

So, maybe Taylor was the better pick?

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JT he wouldn't be overpowered like he was with B-Hop but might find himself in a winable boxing match. I predicted that Pacman would beat Oscar back then for the reasons you stated above. Oscar was a part time fighter, spending alot of time in silk PJ's. He already had one foot out the door and he really underestimated Manny. I also agree with you that Oscar stayed down after that body shot. He had enough that night.

amayseng says:

I agree Taylor out hustled Bhop, one of the fights I think Bhop won clearly. cant remember which one.

Secondly, Taylor is one of the most uncoordinated boxers/athletes I have ever seen. He had a great jab at

one point, but really terrible hand eye coordination and terrible defense. I saw him shoot a basketball once

and couldnt fathom how he became a pro anything let alone a champion. I think Oscar, although no bigger

than a 154 lber

would have beaten JT. He was out of shape for the Sturm fight and Hopkins was just too big and strong at

that point.

For the Pac fight Oscar was drained half to death. That was a terrible idea. Terrible.

Oscar had a long career, we forget how good he really was, he was faded and part time and got a split win

against Floyd, a prime ridiculously athletic Floyd. I had Floyd winning, but Oscar kept it close. At that stage

of his career Floyd should have done more, but he wasnt capable of doing so.

Wonder what a 25 or 28 year old Oscar would have looked like against Floyd?

I cant remember the scores of the Oscar and bhop fight but wasnt it close by the time of stoppage?

brownsugar says:

Ditto.... Oscar was one of the best... Fought EVERYONE... Of course he has to deal with the consequences of his indiscretion... Society will never let him forget. But while he was in his

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prime he was a winner and one of the most popular and well paid boxers ever.

Martinez will have Cotto dancing his moving-backwards dance, trying to survive if he can land a few of those straight lefts... Just watch his whole demeanor change after catching a couple. Martinez will have enough left to deal with Cotton decisively on fight night.

Good fight for us... Bad for Cotto.

amayseng says:

Agreed Bslug, a really good fight for the fans. Canelo vs Angulo is also a great matchup, then add in Pac vs Bradley and it is a guaranteed good few months... Add in Floyd vs perhaps Madaina and that is an intriguing matchup as well. Madainas trainer better have him chasing a young, fast fleet footed sparring partner to get that cardio up.

Radam G says:

Sorry! But Sergio Martinez will get the full truth stepping into dat squared jungle with Miguel "RISING" Angel Cotto. SM is gonna get KTFO! His weak optical illusions don't work on reality.

Don't be surprised if he pulls out of the bout. He's good this and that, anybody can shout. But the truth coming out will be no doubt.

SM's ride is now lame. From four and five years ago being lucky, he is far from being the same. MC can thrash him and make him holla: "What's my name?"

SM is so far gone that he's gonna stumble around the ring like a drunk dame. Hehehe! He's AIGHT! Not great. MC is going to kayo his arse in round eight. SM is gonna have a bad night. MC is gonna look outta SIGHT! Holla!

amayseng says:

Radam lets say Cotto wins.

Does Pac fight Cotto for a mw title?

Radam G says:

No! Holla!

amayseng says:

That would be yet another title in another weight class

no because Cotto wont do it?

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Radam G says:

Da Manny won't do it. First, it is no money in another dance with Miguel. Second, they now have the same trainer. MC is might be coming here to the P-Islands to get his training on for a bit. Holla!

amayseng says:

Yea understandable.

Ok lets say Cotto wins the title. Does he face GGG?

I say he crosses borders to stay away from that beat down

Radam G says:

Hard to say. It is prizefighting. And anything can happen, especially for the right moolah. Holla!

Skibbz says:

I think Martinez will win. I think Cotto is biting off more than he can chew with this one... I don't think he's overmatched, but I think that martinez' experience and confidence will win him the war. Cotto will quickly find himself up against a 4 round deficit and will have to fight against the tide, and his ability to fight against a tide in my opinion is fading..

The Good Doctor says:

[QUOTE=Radam G;44309]Hard to say. It is prizefighting. And anything can happen, especially for the right moolah. Holla![/QUOTE]

Agreed. That's why I think if Cotto wins, he tries to get a catchweight with Chavez Jr.

stormcentre says:

[QUOTE=the Roast;44282]Very good points Storm, My thinking is at the time Jermain just out hustled/outboxed Hopkins in those two fights but was relatively inexperienced. If the Golden Girl (I like that one) were to fight JT he wouldn't be overpowered like he was with B-Hop but might find himself in a winnable boxing match. I predicted that Pacman would beat Oscar back then for the reasons you stated above. Oscar was a part time fighter, spending alot of time in silk PJ's. He already had one foot out the door and he really underestimated Manny. I also agree with you that Oscar stayed down after that body shot. He had enough that night.[/QUOTE]

Yeh . . Golden Girl just knew that there was nothing he could do in there against B-Hop.

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Oscar deserves props though as - for a while there - he really did fight almost everyone. Moved up in weight and all.

Sure he avoided Winky, Karmazin and a few others, but you rarely get someone that fights them all. And everyone wants a piece of you when you're the top dawg draw lottery fighter.

Look at Floyd.

Plus, imagine what Oscar would have done with Floyd if the DLH that rocked up for Ruelas, Leija, Mosely or Whitaker arrived?

Particularly considering that the version that showed up to fight Floyd - albeit a rushed and devoid of any significant sustained anaerobic quality version - held Floyd to a reasonably close points win in 2006.

Anyway, Oscar knew that (without a weight advantage) he wasn't that good against slick and confident guys, particularly those with the Philly Crab, Shoulder Roll and/or similar slip and slide styles.

It's one of the main reasons he employed Mayweather Sr.

Oscar not only knew his style was susceptible to those practitioners - he also knew that was one of the coolest styles that also happened to have the most longevity associated with it; before he even got in the ring with Hopkins.

So, in my humble opinion, I don't believe Oscar went into the Hopkins fight really confident. He knew Hopkins could probably beat Strum and he knew Strum had just beaten him in Golden Girl's previous fight; that turned out to be a stinker on the scorecards and a gift decision to the Golden Girl.

Not a good way to head into your toughest challenge yet.

Therefore Golden Girl was relatively easily convinced midway through the fight with B-Hop that he wasn't going to beat Bernard, particularly after B-Hop took all Oscar could give for 4 or 5 rounds.

At that point Oscar was just starting to obviously reach for breath in between rounds, pay the price for all those cream biscuits, and he was also visibly starting to think what strategy he's going to employ for the remainder of his fitness/fight.

Do I go all out? Or do I conserve?

Nothing I have done has deterred this guy and not only is he hard to hit clean - but when I do land I can't tell if I hurt him.

And he hurts me and keeps on coming forward.

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That's why as soon as B-Hop started to carefully put the pedal down (he never does it in a rush and takes those chances) midway through the fight, Oscar then sensed Hopkins' strength and realized the longer the fight went the less Golden his appearance was going to be afterwards.

Plus he knew Hopkins was the sort of guy that would really relish prolonging the pain and disfiguring Oscar's Billion dollar smile and looks (remember; Allen & Joppy).

As a result Oscar felt fear in the middle of a fight in a way he probably never did before. The trained eye could see it.

Oh, good pick with Pacman against Oscar.

I can't remember who I picked for that fight (I think it was Oscar as Pacman's defence didn't look good) but I knew it was big weight drain for Oscar and that Roach knew both guys really well as he had worked Oscar's corner previously and recently; but was supremely confident of his guy - when isn't he?

Conversely, I also remembered the way Oscar dumped Roach as a trainer left a lot of resentment for Roach too.

Carmine Cas says:

Mayweather-Cotto makes a lot of sense if Cotto wins. Roach thinks Cotto can beat him under his guidance.

amayseng says:

[QUOTE=Carmine Cas;44365]Mayweather-Cotto makes a lot of sense if Cotto wins. Roach thinks Cotto can beat him under his guidance.[/QUOTE]

the first fight was pretty good.

i would like to see it again, cotto would be better under roach and floyd is a few years older.

i dont think floyd takes it. cotto may come in at 158 and floyd wont want that

arodz4410 says:

Correct : Martinez is at the end of his rope. He has maximum 3 fights left. Margarito dropped him and stopped him. Chavez Jr. put doubts in his mind and Murray made the best of his opportunity. Cotto will put up a good battle. Cotto has to come in like Marquez did against Pac-Man. Fully focused. Martinez can be knocked out or stopped. Lets see if Martinez still has the legs and hand speed of his last several fights. Martinez is on a rocky road. I say Martinez will win on points. I / we need to see him fight GGG and be close the unification the

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A lot of people were doubting Cotto before his last fight, time will only tell. I don't blame Martinez for taking the big money fights now, he just turned 39 he doesn't have a lot of time left. TMT fighters are a joke, half of them tested positive for PED's. Floyd is always putting his foot in his mouth.

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I think he would to capture a championship in another division. He already beat Cotto, and this time around his father will be in his corner not uncle Roga. So Floyd is going to be more cautious. But he might be reluctant depending on how Cotto looks. Who knows?

Floyd should have challenged Martinez for all the marbles at middleweight.