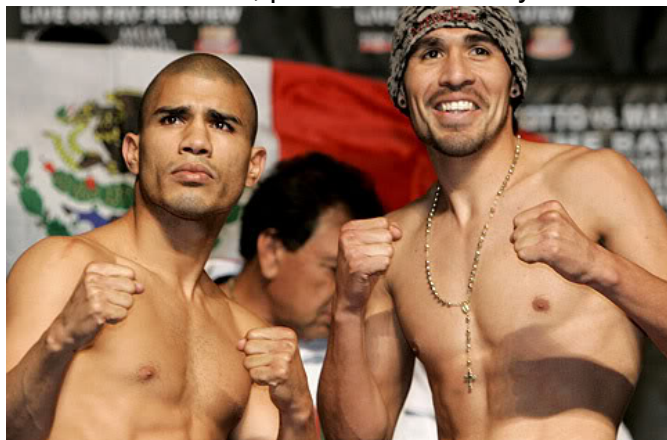


Preview: Cotto/Margarito

Written by {ga=fightdr}

Thursday, July 24 2008 7:00 PM -

It just doesn't get much bigger than this one. Miguel Cotto versus Antonio Margarito. The two top welterweights in the world, and two of boxings top shelf pound for pound fighters. Both have energetic, frenetic, crowd pleasing styles ... and this one has Fight of the Year written all over it. My cousin is all jacked up for this one, and in his latest column, previews Saturday nights mega-fight for us here at The Cleveland Fan.



It isn't often when I get goose bumps leading up to a fight. This Saturday night just happens to be one of those rare occasions. The MGM Grand in Las Vegas will be home to a fight I have been waiting for and talking about since it was announced.

My current pound for pound king, Miguel Cotto, will be stepping in with his most difficult opponent ever in Antonio Margarito. This one has Fight of the Year written all over it.

Cotto brings a remarkable 32-0 record into the ring, with 26 of those wins coming by knockout. He has defeated the better competition of the two fighters. Cotto has beaten Zab Judah, Shane Mosley, Paul Malignaggi, and Carlos Quintana. People say the reason Floyd Mayweather Jr. retired is because he didn't want to fight Cotto. The 147 pound champion has looked impressive just about every time he's fought and is still getting better at just 27 years of age.

Miguel Cotto's style is very fan friendly. He comes to the ring ready to give everything he has. He has great power, a phenomenal work rate, the heart of a champion, and is as good a body puncher as there is in the sport. Does Cotto have the chin of a champion though? We'll find out Saturday night.

Antonio Margarito is 36-5 with 26 knockout wins. Three of those five losses came in his first twelve fights while he was still in his teens. His last loss was against

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Paul Williams when he decided to take the first four rounds off, something we have never seen from him before.

Margarito is known for his hectic pace, that's where his nickname "The Tijuana Tornado" comes from. In order to beat Cotto, he will have to bring him "A" game and not start slow. Cotto is too good and lands too many shots to get behind. Antonio Margarito knows this is chance to be recognized as one of the best fighters in the world today. Many fighters have ducked him in the past and he wants to show every fan why.

There are two key elements to tonight's fight that will have biggest impact on the outcome.

Miguel Cotto has been cut and battered in the past. He managed to win those fights but it's no secret he has been hurt before. Zab Judah, who isn't known as much of a power puncher, had Cotto bloody and cut up. Shane Mosley also has him gasping for air at times. His chin will be put to the test with the bigger and stronger Margarito. If he can avoid the big shots and withstand a few hundred punch rounds, Cotto should remain unbeaten.

The pace of the fight is going to be frantic. These fighters are stepping into hell this evening. Both guys are hungry and determined to prove they are the best in not just the 147 pound division, but in the pound for pound rankings.

Whoever can land more body shots will have a huge upper hand. The way to stop an assault is to take gas out of your opponent's tank. When you have two fighters with similar styles, the guy imposing their will have a huge mental edge to go along with the physical advantage.

The expectations for tonight's fight are off the charts, and I truly believe we are in for a serious treat this evening. These are two great fighters, both with great

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power and speed. Their styles are similar, come forward and land as many punches as possible. They know they are going to have to take some punishment in order to dish more out.

I have been going back and forth on who I think is going to win. I am a big fan of both guys because of how crowd pleasing their styles are. The only thing I know for sure is that it would have to take something very strange for me to be let down. You have two of the most action packed fighters stepping into the ring together in beautiful Las Vegas, what more can you ask for?

This is my pick for Fight of the Year, and it has the makings to be something special. If ever you were to shell out a couple bucks for a pay per view, tonight is the night to do it.