

Huge Undercard for Fury-Wilder 3 Provides Opportunity



Saturday we will see an undercard like we aren't used to in boxing, though Triller has done its best to make their undercards interesting. Billed as a night of heavyweights by PBC and Top Rank, the card has interesting clashes in other weights as well.

Edgar Berlanga (-1000) vs Marcelo Esteban Coceres (+625) (Total Rounds 2.5 Rounds, Over -125)

Berlanga is known as a knockout artist, and with good reason! All but one of his bouts have ended in the first round. However, that sixteen fight streak ended in his last bout where he had to go the full eight rounds to defeat Demond Nicholson by unanimous decision. In that bout, it did seem Nicholson's entire goal was not to get knocked out early, and it worked! He did touch the canvas four times however.

Coceres has a good resume and the Argentine has fought some quality opposition. The only time he left a fight early was against Billy Joe Saunders back in 2019. That bout went 11 rounds before he went down three times and Saunders received the TKO win. The fight was fairly close with Saunders ahead on one card and down by two points on the two others.

That being said, Berlanga's knockout streak was not against abysmal opposition. None of his opponents had losing records. However, a few of the fighters in the streak seemed spooked when going against him. A sort of Mike Tyson-like intimidation probably aided Berlanga's streak about halfway through.

Still, this is the best opponent Berlanga has fought and Coceres must view this as a ticket back as a contender in the Super Middleweight Division. It may be unlikely, but he could be on the list of fighters either Plant or Canelo fights after their match next month with a win.

I feel like the fight can get past the halfway point in the 3rd round.

The Pick: Over 2.5 Rounds for .5 unit. (.625 unit to win .5).

Robert Helenius (+195) vs. Adam Kownacki (-250) (Total Rounds 6.5, Pick 'em)

Wilder and Fury is not the only rematch on the card. Helenius and Kownacki fought right before the pandemic started in a great bout back in March of 2020. Kownacki came forward with Helenius using his height and reach advantage to keep him at bay. While Kownacki won the first three rounds according to the judges, Helenius caught him twice in the fourth, knocking him down twice enroute to a stoppage win.

The question, as it will be in the Wilder fight, is if Kownacki's loss was a fluke. Kownacki has fought a former World Champion and four others who have challenged for titles, including Helenius. So, Kownacki has been in with the best and it cannot be said he simply wasn't ready for this level. But Helenius then and now presents a different challenge than those fighters. He fights tall and is very comfortable fighting off the back foot.

Kownacki's strategy has always been to come forward and overwhelm his opponents. This plays right into the strengths of Helenius. Helenius continued to tie up Kownacki during the last fight and stop his momentum before getting Kownacki in trouble.

Kownacki is also taking this fight on the road, as the last one was before a crowd of red-clad Polish supporters in Brooklyn who have embraced the baby-faced contender. Kownacki seems to believe this will help. As any fighter will tell you, being at home does have a few challenges whether it be interviews or ticket requests. It seems everyone wants something from you up until you enter the ring. On the other hand, being in Vegas is unlike fighting in any other city.

It all comes down to Kownacki and if he can change enough. Also, did getting knocked out for the first time in his career change him? Those are two huge questions to answer. We've seen other fighters avenge defeat in the past. Dillian Whyte's stoppage of Povetkin comes to mind. However, this one feels different. Helenius looks to be in phenomenal shape and Kownacki seemed almost meek at the press conference this week. The value of getting the previous winner at almost 2-to-1 seems to be the best bet on the card for Saturday and I plan on taking it. We're hoping the Polish fans come to town and push Helenius to over 2/1, but we'll use the current line for this pick.

Helenius to win (+195) over Kownacki 1 unit to win 1.95 units.

Record for 2021: 3-2, +1.11 units.