



MIGUEL COTTO VS. SADAM ALI INTERNATIONAL MEDIA CONFERENCE CALL TRANSCRIPT FROM NOV. 15, 2017

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OSCAR DE LA HOYA: Thank you very much. First of all, to all the media who has joined us for today, for the Miguel Cotto-Sadam Ali international media conference call.

Just want to say a few words about the event. Obviously, this is a classic event. As one star says good-bye and another one looks to try to fill that void, that one we'll leave behind.

What can you say about Miguel Cotto that hasn't already been said during his two decades in boxing? He's a first ballot Hall of Famer, a true legend in Puerto Rico, New York, and beyond, and he's obviously been a true credit to the sport of boxing. He's Puerto Rico's only four division world champion, six-time world champion. He has fought the who's who in boxing in the sport. And on December 2nd, he will look to go out as a champion and defend his WBO Junior Middleweight World Championship. And just like he was given a shot for his first World Championship many years ago, he is now doing the same for Sadam Ali.

Sadam Ali is a top contender with a fantastic resume himself. He's a 2008 Olympian. He has knockout power in both hands. He's had a series of regional titles, and he's now looking to step it up and fight for that world title against a legend in boxing. And more than that, he's doing it for something far too many boxers shy away from. By going against a legend, Sadam is daring to be great. That is how you make a real name for yourself in the sport of boxing.

I'm glad this historic matchup will take place on the network of champions. You can catch it on HBO World Championship Boxing, beginning at 10:00 p.m. eastern, 7:00 p.m. pacific time. The full undercard for Miguel Cotto and Ali is packed with talent and will be announced very shortly, so stay tuned for that.

I do want to thank our sponsors, our main sponsor for the sport of boxing, who obviously takes boxing to a whole new level, and that is Tecate, "*THE OFFICIAL BEER OF BOXING.*" I want to thank Hennessy: "Never stop. Never Settle," and the best tequila in the world, Casa Mexico Tequila. So thank you to all the sponsors who contribute to this great sport of boxing.

Tickets are still on sale obviously and can be purchased at Madison Square Garden. You can go to goldenboytickets.com as well. They are moving fast. As you well know, Miguel Cotto has fought numerous times there. He's sold out the arena many, many times. You want to get your tickets soon as this event will be sold out.

Also, want to let you know that this event is being promoted by Golden Boy Promotions, Miguel Cotto Promotions. And one thing we do want to emphasize is Puerto Rico needs help. Puerto Rico needs help more than ever. What we're finding out, obviously, through media, through family and friends that we have over there is that a lot of families are still left without electricity, without water, without any contact with other people. It's devastating what happened.

Obviously, because of Miguel Cotto, part of the ticket sales, Miguel Cotto and his team, along with Golden Boy, will be able to choose different charities to give back and to make sure that families, that families are being taken care of and make sure that we do continue to give back and shed light on this terrible devastation that took place in Puerto Rico.

On that note, I just want to say thank you again to all the media for shedding light on what's really important, and obviously, we're thrilled and excited that Miguel Cotto is going to be inside that square circle on December 2nd against Sadam Ali on HBO.

Without any further ado, I want to introduce you to the teams. Let me have the honor to introduce Sadam Ali. He's the current WBA International Welterweight Champion. Obviously, he was a decorated boxer who was in the Junior Olympics, the under 19 champion, as well as the New York Golden Gloves champ and represented the United States in 2008 in Beijing in the Olympic games.

Sadam, I feel, deserves this shot. He's a tremendous fighter. He's a fighter who is willing to fight everyone and anybody, obviously, to be great, to be a legend. Let me introduce to you a fighter they call the World Kid, and that is Sadam Ali. Sadam?

SADAM ALI: Thank you, Oscar. It's a pleasure being here and being on the big stage in Madison Square Garden against a legend, who I grew up watching. It's a little scary, but I've been working hard, and I'm ready to go out there and perform. I know I'm a huge underdog, but I'm ready to go out there and put on a great show. I know what I've got to look for out there, and it's amazing.

OSCAR DE LA HOYA: Thank you, Sadam.

And at this moment, I would like to introduce to you Team Miguel Cotto. Like I said, every fighter needs a great trainer behind him, the man who comes up with the strategies and obviously is there for support not only the night of the fight, but months leading up to the event. So I would like to introduce to you the Hall of Famer. He is an amazing trainer, and that is Freddie Roach. Freddie?

FREDDIE ROACH: Thank you, Oscar.

Miguel is doing really good. We have a great training camp. He's in great shape. And we're going to finish up strong for the year and head to New York pretty soon. It's going to be a great night. I'm looking forward to this fight, and Miguel's going to be at his best. Thank you.

OSCAR DE LA HOYA: Thank you, Freddie.

And now to introduce to you the man himself. I mean, what can I say that you already don't know? I'm just proud and fortunate to be able to be promoting his final event at the Garden, where he has performed -- I believe this will be his 11th performance there, and he has had amazing fights. He has given us some incredible, incredible showings against top, top fighters, the best fighters in the world, and he continues doing so.

So making his 24th -- I mean, 24th appearance on HBO, and his 10th and final showcase at the MSG, let me introduce to you from Puerto Rico, Caguas, Puerto Rico, Miguel Cotto.

MIGUEL COTTO: Thank you, Oscar.

It's great to be here again. Like Oscar and people have said, it's my final fight, and I'm working hard for making the final fight really good for everybody. All we have to do is wait until the day of the fight. We are ready for the fight.

OSCAR DE LA HOYA: Gracias, Miguel. So now we can open it up for questions.

Q: Hello, everybody. Hi there, Miguel, Sadam. Good to talk to you guys today. Want to start with a question for you, Sadam. You mentioned in your opening remarks, you come into the fight and you know you're the underdog although you're getting the opportunity to fight at home. You say you're fighting against an opponent that you grew up watching. Can you talk about just what goes into your thought process about fighting in an arena that you grew up thinking about fighting in, fighting a guy like Miguel Cotto, who as Oscar says, is going to be in the Hall of Fame someday. How do you not let it get to your mental state to overwhelm you when you get in the ring with him?

SADAM ALI: I've been fighting since I was eight years old, and I've been in big arenas. Of course, it's going to be a little bit more in this one. But this is the opportunity of a lifetime, and I took the challenge against a legend. I dare to be great, like Oscar says. I fear nothing, and I don't hold back. This is the opportunity of a lifetime in Madison Square Garden. It's going to be amazing. I feel like we're going to put on a great show, and I'm excited, and I'm ready.

Q: Do you have any concerns about moving up another weight class? Some guys, they go up, they may get used to the weight class with a fight, maybe two. You're stepping in against not only moving up in weight, but obviously fighting the best opponent of your career.

SADAM ALI: Yeah, it's a huge challenge, a big step up. The biggest opponent in my career, and I'm also moving up to another weight class. But I love the challenge, and I'm ready to do whatever I have to do.

My weight -- I'm not really, really down in weight. My weight is okay. I'm where I'm supposed to be. So I'm excited.

Q: How much of a fan of Miguel's were you earlier, maybe before you turned pro? Were you like a guy that was a hard-core Cotto fan that might go to the Garden in those fights or just sort of followed his career just as a regular kind of boxer? Were you really a big-time Miguel Cotto fan?

SADAM ALI: I followed his career, and I've also been to a few fights. I always liked his style and what he did. He's fought the best. He's had some great fights. So if you love boxing, you're going to grow up watching Miguel Cotto. So, yes, I did come up watching for sure.

Q: Very good. Thank you for that, Sadam. Hello, Miguel. How are you today? Miguel, you've been saying all along this is going to be your last fight. Wondering if you can just say is there any sadness that you're bowing out? Are you excited to be bowing out? What's your feelings about going into the ring one last time of what will end what's been a great career?

MIGUEL COTTO: After having the opportunity to provide the best for my family with boxing, all I can say about boxing is I'm thankful for being a boxer, and I have to thank a lot for boxing providing the best for me and my family. That's all I can say.

Q: So no regret, no sadness? Are you excited to move on to the next part? I'm just wondering where you're at as far as your thoughts about your emotions of this being the last fight?

MIGUEL COTTO: No, I'm good. I'm good. I just want to start a new life and a better life with my family, not being away from them and just take advantage of every moment with them. That's all I want.

Q: So as you look back -- you're going to get asked a lot, I'm sure, leading up to this fight about your career. What's been your highlight fight, in your opinion? Like your best moment in the ring. And then maybe what was your worst moment in the ring?

MIGUEL COTTO: I enjoyed my whole career, and I can't point at one fight, you know. I enjoyed my whole career. Every moment made me be the boxer I am right now, the person I am right now. I would have to say my whole career has been amazing for me.

Q.Any negatives?

MIGUEL COTTO: No. All of the negative things are in the past.

Q: Freddie, as you prepare Miguel for what he says will be his last fight, as you've been with guys that are in their prime and also guys that are older that shouldn't be fighting, do you think Miguel is - or give me your perspective on his selecting this time to call it a career. How much do you think he has left? Could he go on longer? Are you happy with the decision he's made? What's your perspective on his saying this is the end for him?

FREDDIE ROACH: I'm happy he's going out on top. We're training really hard for this fight. The training camp is identical to all our training camps. He works hard. We push each other.

And just because this is his last fight, no one's taking it easy or anything like that. We're working very hard for this fight, and going out on top is the best way to do it, I feel. I'm really happy with his decision. He's had a great career, and he wants to spend more time with his family, and that's great. He's going to have a great opportunity to enjoy that more.

Q: My question is for Sadam. Sadam, what do you feel the challenges will be in the ring that night being that you're going to face a bigger guy at a weight you've never fought at? Just how do you expect that to play out in the fight?

SADAM ALI: It's a great challenge. He has a lot of great things in his fight arsenal. He has great power. He has a great jab. He can come forward, and he's also learned how to move a little bit too. So it's a mix of everything, and I have to be prepared and ready for all that. I have to be at my best. I have to be in the greatest shape if I want to perform like I need to.

Q: Do you have to be more careful in this fight, in a sense, being that he's bigger and I'm assuming he'll outweigh you in the ring when you get in there?

SADAM ALI: Of course I've got to be more careful. He has tremendous power. I'm always careful in my fights, but this fight, of course, I should be a little more careful, and I'll have my eye open a lot more and stay focused throughout the whole fight. He is the bigger guy. Like I said, I'm moving up a weight class. This is a huge challenge for me, but I'm up for it.

Q: I also have a question for Freddie. Freddie, would you be disappointed if Miguel didn't win this fight by knockout being that he's fighting a smaller guy?

FREDDIE ROACH: I don't ever plan on knocking anybody out in a fight. We're training to go 12 hard rounds and win every one of them. Training camp is going well, and we have great sparring partners. He's working out really well. We're right on track right now. If a knockout comes, that will be a bonus, but I expect Cotto to win this fight and go out on top for sure. But the thing is we are fighting a younger generation of new kids coming up. Some people say in with the new, out with the old, but we're not that old yet.

Q: Freddie, is there a sense of how you think Miguel still would do against Canelo and guys at that level? I know you still feel he can fight at a very high level. Any disappointment in the sense that, although you're happy for him moving forward with his family, that you won't get the chance to fight Canelo again or maybe even Triple G or something like that?

FREDDIE ROACH: You know, Triple G and Canelo would be great opponents, and we look forward to fighting them, but they all have obligations before, and the next best guy was the young guy coming up, the next generation. We are getting a chance at that, and we'll see how good he really is.

Miguel will be on top of his game. And, again, we would have loved to go out with one of the bigger names, but the thing is they're not available at this point, and we want to stay busy.

Q: Oscar, I was just wondering if you could just talk about how you maybe wanted to make a big fight for Miguel before his career ended, but just logistically it didn't work out in terms of Canelo and guys like that. Is there some disappointment in the sense that it just didn't work out that way?

OSCAR DE LA HOYA: There's no disappointment whatsoever. I mean, look, everything happens for a reason. Miguel Cotto has had a stellar career, an amazing career. He's fighting in the main fight against Sadam Ali, and he's fighting in his second hometown, which is New York at the Garden, right next to Puerto Rico, and fighting on HBO live. There's no disappointment whatsoever. Everything is all positive.

And Miguel Cotto deserves this chance of a lifetime of -- imagine that, going out on top or vying to go out on top, on HBO, in front of your hometown in New York at the Garden against a great fighter like Ali. This is another great opportunity for the boxing fans and for Miguel Cotto.

Q: Oscar, you know what it's like, as a great fighter, when you retire, the urge to come back. You've discussed it several times about possibly coming back and stuff. How hard will that be for Miguel, just the competitor in Miguel, to resist that urge as he moves forward?

OSCAR DE LA HOYA: Obviously, there's many reasons why a fighter can choose to come back, but a fighter like Miguel Cotto, he has everything he needs, most importantly, his family. He has a whole island that supports him, that is with him 100 percent. Millions of people who supported him all over the world so there's no reason. He has one last chance, and believe me, he's obviously training to give everyone the best show possible. I believe we're going to see the best Miguel Cotto we've seen on December 2nd.

Q: So you don't feel we'll see him in the ring again? There's no possibility of that, you don't think?
OSCAR DE LA HOYA: I believe him when he says this is his last fight.

(Question and answer in Spanish.)

TRANSLATOR: I'm going to take a moment to translate that. The reporter has asked Miguel if he has any regrets or if he has anything that he wishes he would have done in his career before he retired.

And Miguel responded with, no, I have done everything in my career that I've wanted to do. This is the final. His decision is to retire now and spend more time with his family.

Q: Miguel, I wanted to ask you, I know we talked a little bit in my first question about some of the highlights of your career, you said you enjoyed everything. I was hoping you could maybe just give me your opinion about what you think was your most satisfying victory or your biggest victory.

MIGUEL COTTO: I can't point to one victory. I enjoy my whole career. Every victory became part of my career, and I'm happy with the way my career is going, the way my career is going to end on December 2nd, and I'm really happy with my whole career. I'm not going to point to one fight. I'm going to look at my whole career.

Q: Is there a fight that you feel like made your career sort of, that put you in people's minds and made you into a topnotch fighter? I mean, I have my own opinions. I obviously covered your entire career. But you've had so many good fights and significant fights. What's the one that you feel like sort of put you over with the public?

MIGUEL COTTO: I think the fight with Torres in Calaveras is the one that put Miguel Cotto on the map.

Q: Why do you say that? That was a great fight back in '05, I believe.

MIGUEL COTTO: It was the way the fight was happening this night and the way I woke up from the canvas, and it was the fight that put Miguel Cotto on the map.

Q: And you feel like maybe that's the fight that made the fans sort of realize, whoa, look at this guy, how exciting he is. Is that sort of what you're getting at?

MIGUEL COTTO: Pardon me?

Q: When you talked about the Torres fight, was the way that that fight went and how you won it, are you saying that was sort of the fight that made people recognize that you were a very exciting and really good fighter?

MIGUEL COTTO: Exactly.

Q: Do you have thoughts -- I mean, can you give me your thought -- I mean, you had a couple of big wins not that long after that, Malignaggi and Zab Judah and Shane Mosley. Do you have thoughts about those fights? Those were pretty significant fights for you at that time?

MIGUEL COTTO: I've been blessed. You know, I had a wonderful career, and all I can say is that every moment in the gym, every moment on the track was -- my fight was a reflection of every hard moment of training, and I'm really happy and blessed for that.

Q: So I've got to ask you, though. I think maybe -- you tell me if I'm wrong -- just as far as your own personal satisfaction -- I know all the fights made you who you are, but personal satisfaction, I have to think that knocking out Margarito in the rematch was special for you. I remember your reaction after that fight, and you seemed very satisfied that you were able to sort of beat him down the way you did. Can you speak to that moment for your career?

MIGUEL COTTO: Was just showing people what happened in the first fight, that was over.

Q: Meaning like you felt his hands were illegal in that first fight?

MIGUEL COTTO: Everybody knows what happened in the first fight.

Q: Now, you also -- I mean, you have some losses along the way, but you gave -- for example, I'll throw this out there for you. When you fought Floyd Mayweather, I know you didn't win that fight, but you gave him just about as tough a fight as anybody has given Mayweather in his entire career. Did you take any satisfaction in that? I know it was painful to lose, but you fought so well against the

fighter who everyone thought was the number one fighter in the world who was undefeated at that time. It's not like you just held your own; you didn't come that far from beating him.

MIGUEL COTTO: I stepped up to every opportunity I had in the ring, as in the fight with Mayweather. I had a great career and much satisfaction. That's my career, and I'm happy with it.

Q: Can you tell me how significant it was for you when you stopped Martinez? Not only did you win the middle weight championship in that fight, but it obviously made history for Puerto Rico by you becoming the first fighter to win the title in the fourth weight class, what that meant to you?

MIGUEL COTTO: I became the first Puerto Rican boxer to be champion in the fourth division, and it was another accomplishment in my career.

Q: Can you talk about where you stack up in the great Puerto Rican fighters, whether it's yourself, Felix Trinidad, Wilfredo Gomez, Benitez, Carlos Ortiz. There's so many great fighters in Puerto Rico. Ivan Calderon has a good chance to be elected to the Boxing Hall of Fame when the ballots come out -- or when the results come out next month. Where do you put yourself in the list of the great Puerto Rican fighters?

MIGUEL COTTO: I'm just another -- I was just a kid who wants to be a boxer, then became a man. All I did in my life, in my career, was try to do my best. It's not my works, not my job to put myself in any position. I just tried to do my best every day.

Q: And just one other question, Miguel. When you go into this fight, there's been so much discussion about Puerto Rico in the news recently because of the terrible hurricane that did so much damage. How much is that on your mind, and how are your family members and friends dealing with it where they live in the island?

MIGUEL COTTO: I've been in Puerto Rico my whole life, and I know what capable Puerto Rican people is. I know that. The hurricane was tough for us as Puerto Ricans, but together we are going to overcome this and be grateful for that.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you to the media for the questions and for dialing in. Miguel and Sadam have to get back to training. Before we wrap up the call, I wanted to give both of them an opportunity to make some closing comments.

Sadam, do you have a few final words you want to share today?

SADAM ALI: First of all, I want to thank God for this opportunity and for me being healthy. I am very appreciative of everything. I want to thank all the fans for tuning in, and I know there's a lot of doubt in me in this fight, and some people think it's not going to be as good, but I will make sure that it is, and I'm excited. I'm ready to go out there and put on a show. December 2nd is going to be a great night.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Miguel, do you have any final words you want to share with the media?

MIGUEL COTTO: All I have to say, thank you to the media, all the fans around the world. I'm going to see everybody on December 2nd for my final fight. Thank you very much.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks everyone for joining us for the call today. Just a quick reminder that Cotto will have a Los Angeles media workout on Monday, November 20th. It will be at Wild Card, and we will have some of the Cotto-Ali undercard fighters there as well. Stay tuned to your e-mail inboxes for details on the workout and also the remaining undercard bouts we're going to announce very shortly.

For the New York media, mark your calendars for Tuesday, November 29th, for Sadam Ali's media workout. We will also have the East Coast undercard fighters there as well. Details will be shared soon, including time and location.

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Cotto vs. Ali, a 12-round fight for the Cotto's WBO World Junior Middleweight Championship, is presented by Golden Boy Promotions and Miguel Cotto Promotions. **Vargas vs. Negrete** is a 12-round fight for Vargas' WBC World Super Bantamweight Title and is presented by Golden Boy Promotions and Miguel Cotto Promotions in association with Promociones del Pueblo. The event is sponsored by *Tecate*, *"THE OFFICIAL BEER OF BOXING,"* Hennessy *"Never Stop. Never Settle"*, and Casa Mexico Tequila. The event will take place Saturday, December 2 at Madison Square Garden in New York City and will be televised live on HBO World Championship Boxing beginning at 10:00 p.m. ET/PT.

Tickets for Cotto vs. Ali are priced at \$500, \$300, \$200, \$100 and \$50 and are on sale. Tickets can be purchased at the Madison Square Garden Box Office, all Ticketmaster outlets, Ticketmaster charge by phone (866-858-0008) and online at www.ticketmaster.com, www.goldenboytickets.com or www.MSG.com.

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