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Shawn Porter Exclusive: To Take Spence's Heart

By [Caryn A. Tate](#) on September 19, 2019



"Berto was the prime example of [making my opponent uncomfortable]," Porter said.

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Whether he utilizes the high-intensity buzzsaw style or he boxes from the outside, his goal is to do what his opponent isn't comfortable with...

Over the years, many world-class boxers have stressed the importance of discipline in relation to the ability to rise to—and remain at—the top of the sport. Fighters like Bernard Hopkins, Floyd Mayweather Jr., Andre Ward, and a multitude of others have been vocal about their belief that their dedication to the sport and their hard work are major aspects of how they got to the top and stayed there for years.

“Showtime” Shawn Porter (30-2-1, 17 KOs) is no exception. The WBC world welterweight champion and his team, including his head coach and father Kenny Porter, have long committed themselves to being disciplined—not just during training camp, but in the months between fights as well.

“We take a lot of pride in my work ethic and how hard we work,” said Shawn, speaking exclusively to Boxing.com ahead of his September 28 unification bout versus Errol Spence. “This is who I am: a guy who can be aggressive, a guy who can sustain a pace and a rhythm for a long period of time. We also have confidence that the other guys don't work that hard or want to fight at that pace for that 12-round period of time. So for us it becomes just as much a mental thing as it is a physical fight.”

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Porter is well known for being difficult to deal with in the ring, particularly when he utilizes his trademark buzzsaw style. In his April 2017 victory over former world champion Andre Berto, Porter ground Berto down with his relentless inside attack. Shawn utilized his foot and hand speed, feints, and a variety of angles to outwork and rough up Berto, who was dropped three times before the referee waved it off in the ninth round.

“Andre Berto was the prime example of [making my opponent uncomfortable],” Porter said. “A lot of people talk about how rough the fight was, but it was simply something he couldn't handle. He couldn't handle the pressure. He's older, and going down that road was like something he didn't want to [do]. So I kept up the pressure and made it an aggressive fight.”

“That's something that Errol Spence has been talking a lot about—he says that he has a high work rate and he likes to dictate the pace of the fight. I don't know if he's missing the kind of rate I work at, the pace I keep during a fight, but in a lot of ways I don't think he's gonna be ready for that.”

Shawn has studied IBF world titleholder Spence's previous fights. A few specific things stood out to Porter.

“A lot of times when he's been hit, he's been hit with the second and third punches that he's not expecting guys to throw,” Shawn said. “He's a fighter who kind of reminds me of when I was preparing for Keith Thurman. A lot of guys were scared of Thurman's power so they weren't themselves in the ring. I think the same goes for Errol Spence. They're worried about his power, his technique and his southpaw stance so they just aren't themselves. Including Mikey Garcia. I think Mikey came out with a great game plan. He looked very good in the first round but I think he might have seen something and he kind of psyched himself out.”

“For the most part that's what I gather from watching [Spence's] fights: that no one has pushed him, no one has forced him to fight. Everyone has allowed him to be comfortable.”

Porter has proven throughout his career that he is the antithesis of that. Whether he utilizes the high-intensity buzzsaw style or he boxes from the outside, his goal is to do what his opponent isn't comfortable with.

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When he fought Cuban [Yordenis Ugas](#) in March, Shawn boxed from range throughout the 12-round bout, surprising not only Ugas but a lot of observers as well. In the later rounds, Ugas began gesturing at Porter, urging him to come forward. Shawn didn't fall for it. He understood that in this instance, what would make his foe uncomfortable was boxing and moving.

"I could tell in the ring that [Ugas] was prepared for one thing: for it to be a dog fight," Porter said. "He was expecting to hit me with the tough hard body shots he hits everyone else with. He was expecting me to come forward the whole night. When I did something different, he didn't really catch onto it so he was trying to get me to do what he prepared for. We're always prepared to do everything. The aggressive counterpunch, use the ring, speed from the outside, power punches on the inside, the whole nine. I'm gonna always do what's required to win.

"I think that's one thing Errol Spence is missing," Shawn added. "At least publicly, he's talked about me being a dirty fighter and being an aggressive fighter—they don't talk about anything else. I am expecting him to get prepared for it, but I still think it's gonna catch him off balance and it'll have those guys in the corner thinking."

Last September, [Porter won his second world title](#) in a fight versus former world champion Danny Garcia. In that bout, Shawn alternated boxing from the outside with combination punching and pressure on the inside to win a clear decision.

"We prepared for Danny Garcia with the understanding that he likes to punch between your punches and counter punch, so we wanted to make him uncomfortable by making him be first," Porter explained. "No one's gonna stand there and wait and wait and wait. So I came out on my toes, baiting him in, and we played that role as long as we wanted to and then flipped the script near the end of the fight and tried to be more aggressive and take control of the fight. We got a win."

Looking ahead to his fight with Spence, Porter discussed his take on the bout and his opponent specifically.

"This is a very interesting fight for a lot of reasons. I think he and I are a lot alike in the ring, and who can be stronger is gonna be the one who can take control of the fight. We definitely have a rhythm to be aggressive against Errol Spence, but also a rhythm to take away what he does well which is being aggressive, being able to use the ring and being a ring general. I know he takes pride in being a ring general."

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Shawn is keenly aware of the different angles that must be utilized by either the orthodox fighter or the southpaw in order for one of them to be more effective.

"The thing with a southpaw fighter and orthodox fighter is that for both of us, angles determine everything. I think I have a good understanding of those angles, how to create those angles, and how to hurt him. It's all about getting there first. So I'm getting there first."

Porter has stated in the lead-up to this bout that he will "take Spence's heart and his will." When asked what he meant exactly, Shawn broke it down.

"Spence has a lot of will. He has a lot of determination. He has a lot of confidence in himself. I think it's just gonna be a matter of time before I'm doing so many of the right things that it starts to frustrate him, that it starts to worry his corner...and once

you get worried, that's when your heart is being taken. When you start to doubt yourself, you start to doubt if you're winning, you start to doubt your skills, and [you're wondering] what can I do to win? That's what I mean.

"I am thoroughly looking forward to this fight."

"Showtime" has also stated in the press that he will stop Errol Spence. He articulated why he made that prediction, and how he sees it going down.

"We did things to increase the power and things like that, so knocking him out is definitely a goal. You know what punches will work and what to do when they work. So especially against a southpaw, we do have specific punches and movements that we expect to show up and lead to a big knockout.

"I mean what [bigger] statement could you make in the boxing world than me knocking out Errol Spence?"

Spence vs. Porter will take place Saturday, September 28 at Staples Center in Los Angeles. The main card will be broadcast live on [FOX pay-per-view](#) starting at 6pm PT/9pm ET, with the prelims airing on FS1 starting at 4:30pm PT/7:30pm ET

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