

## Ricardo Mayorga: Who Can He Beat ?

Written by Frank Lotierzo  
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WBA-WBC welterweight champ Ricardo Mayorga is riding high, fresh off his second consecutive victory over former champ Vernon Forrest. I've read where fans are matching him up with some of the upper tier junior middleweights (mainly Oscar DeLaHoya) and undisputed middleweight champ Bernard Hopkins. In fact, Mayorga himself has been issuing challenges to Hopkins and DeLaHoya whenever he's in front of a microphone.

Right now, it seems that Ricardo Mayorga is the talk of the boxing world, and minds are speculating as to who he can and can't beat. No doubt, Mayorga is an exciting fighter with a personality that draws fans and interest in boxing, and this is good. The other positive about Mayorga is that he can fight, and appears to be willing to take on all fighters, which is refreshing. In my opinion, he is the best welterweight in the world. If there is a welterweight in boxing who can beat Mayorga, I haven't seen him.

However, lets not get ahead of ourselves in anointing him the greatest thing to come down the pike. Remember, his biggest wins are against "Six Heads" Lewis, who had a suspect chin, and other than beating a shopworn James Page, he didn't really turn the welterweight division upside down. His signature wins have come against Vernon Forrest, who certainly didn't turn out to be the second coming of Thomas Hearns like some media and fans predicted. Most felt that Forrest was still a question mark despite beating Shane Mosley twice. It was thought that Forrest had Mosley's number from a style vantage point, and other than his fights versus Mosley, he hadn't really impressed.

We found out that Vernon Forrest is tough and has heart, along with very good boxing skills. We also know that it's very unlikely that he will ever win the welterweight title as long as Mayorga is the champ. Mayorga showed that he is in good condition, can punch, has a good chin and is more than willing. Another thing Mayorga is, is very unorthodox, which is an asset especially when you can punch. I also think Forrest exposed Mayorga as being somewhat vulnerable to the body. Although Forrest didn't go to Mayorga's body enough, it cannot be disputed that when he did, he slowed Ricardo down.

Right now, it seems to be unanimous that most regard Mayorga the world's best welterweight. It also seems to be that many are jumping ahead and matching him up against DeLaHoya and Hopkins. Before putting him in with the top junior middleweights, I'd like to see him clean out the welterweights first. Lets not forget, he's not a great fighter, and is effective due to his awkwardness and power. That being said, he's definitely beat able. I don't think he is a fighter that anyone will remember for years to come. And that's not taking anything away from him; it's just a fact.

In regard to the junior middleweights, I think he's 50-50 to beat Mosley and Vargas. I see Mosley's hand speed and body punching being an obstacle for Mayorga, and think Mosley can get his punches off inside of Mayorga's looping left and overhand right. This is a fight I'd love to see (especially if Mosley beats DeLaHoya in Sept). Against Vargas, I see Mayorga possibly

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exploiting Vargas' chin but, would be hard pressed to pick a winner. However, it's still a fight I'd pay to see. I would pick Winky Wright to beat Mayorga. I see this match up somewhat like the Mayorga-Forrest rematch except Winky is stronger than Forrest and would fight him better from outside. Winky's strength would also suit him when Mayorga gets rough on the inside trying to maul. I would pick Wright to win by decision.

The fight that everyone would like to see is DeLaHoya-Mayorga. In this fight, I would pick DeLaHoya to beat him convincingly. No, I'm not a DeLaHoya apologist (I wrote that Sugar Ray Leonard would've taken him apart at their best). However, DeLaHoya must be given his props because he's fought everybody and has faced all different type styles along the way. Even the biggest Oscar critic would have to admit no fighter has gone through him (IMO he beat Quartey and Trinidad, drew with Whitaker and was beaten by Mosley).

In a DeLaHoya-Mayorga match up, what does Mayorga bring to upset DeLaHoya other than awkwardness and power? Oscar has faced and defeated awkward fighters, and has shown he has a very good chin along with being tough. Mayorga doesn't punch as hard as Trinidad, especially with his left hook. When he's facing incoming punches, he doesn't apply as much pressure as Trinidad does. Remember, DeLaHoya is a better boxer than Forrest and has more power. He definitely is stronger and has better legs to go along with being more durable. I don't give Mayorga a shot to beat DeLaHoya. I just think Oscar is too polished and complete to lose to Mayorga. This is a fight I don't have to think about for a second. DeLaHoya may not stop Mayorga, but he definitely gets his hand raised.

Regarding Hopkins-Mayorga, I have no interest in seeing this because I see no way Mayorga wins a round. I'd rather see Hopkins fight someone who is more of a threat to beat him, or who at least brings something to the ring to possibly upset him with. Mayorga, doesn't punch hard enough, isn't strong enough, isn't nearly a good enough boxer and doesn't even have an advantage in toughness to get by the middleweight champ--and neither does DeLaHoya!