

The Comings and Goings in Boxing

Written by Steve Kim

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It seems that folks in the game of boxing can't decide whether they're coming or going. From fighters on down, everyone is having a tough time deciding if they want to stick around the red light district of sports. Case in point, Jose Sulaiman, the dictator of the WBC, who a few weeks ago was telling everyone that it was time for him to step down and let someone else lead the organization. But alas, at the WBC convention in Thailand, he said because of the overwhelming support that he received from his constituents that he decided to stay on as the head honcho.

In essence, he basically elected himself to another lifetime term. It seems that Graciano Rocchigiani didn't KO Sulaiman after all.

Expect another 'retirement' announcement from Sulaiman in a few years, only to be followed by the obligatory reconsideration of his position. The only thing missing here were 'hanging chads.'

Then you have the curious case of featherweight standout Manny Pacquiao and his estranged promoter Murad Muhammad. Now, if you've followed their saga at all the last few years you know there's always been an issue over the accounting of money that 'the Pac Man' is supposed to receive.

Seemingly after every fight, Pacquiao is suspicious of his promoter and threatens to leave him. Then after a short period of time, like clockwork, Pacquiao will come back and pledge his allegiance to the promoter and state that they are one big happy family.

It was just a few weeks ago that Pacquiao had begun training again in Los Angeles under the direction of Freddie Roach, when he suddenly went back to the Phillipines in a huff. You guessed it, he was unhappy about his situation with Muhammad—who's never been accused of being the most scrupulous of promoters.

In the past Pacquiao has been like a battered wife, who after years of abuse, will move out for a short while only to return to the same situation in due time.

What happens this time? Does Pacquiao go back to Muhammad again or has he called a Gloria Allred to bail him out for good?

How's this for coming and going, when Felix Trinidad faced Ricardo Mayorga in his return to the ring, it was Trinidad who was coming back from his two-and-a-half year retirement and Mayorga who had been the active prizefighter.

After an exciting eight rounds of action that saw Trinidad make a triumphant return, he regained his position among the game's elite. As for Mayorga? Well, almost immediately after the bout he would announce his own retirement and then be placed under house arrest for an alleged sexual assault that took place in his homeland of Nicaragua last month.

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Trinidad had indeed come back, Mayorga, could be going away for awhile.

Speaking of guys coming out of retirement, Ike Quartey who was a highly respected welterweight champion in the late 90's has recently announced his intentions to come back to the ring.

'the Bazooka' at one time was considered one of the best fighters in the world, but as the 90's wound down, his appearances in the ring became far less frequent. His last bout was a thorough 12-round loss to a precocious Fernando Vargas in 2000.

It was said that Quartey, who had various business interests in his native Ghana, was simply doing too well to ever come back to boxing. But as we've seen in the past, the allure of boxing sometimes has nothing to do with the financial gains the sport can bring.

Which brings us to Don King, who in the wake of Trinidad's glorious return to the ring, is now threatening a full blown war against HBO, the cable giant that controls most of the purse strings in the industry, and with whom he has had an acrimonious relationship with in the past.

King was incensed at what he perceived to be a double standard between he and Bob Arum. He felt that his rival had gotten much more of a marketing and promotional push for his pay-per-view show featuring Oscar De La Hoya and Bernard Hopkins, than he did for Trinidad-Mayorga. Then there was the broadcast himself, which King felt did not follow the tenor that he wanted.

Usually King likes to dominate every aspect of his shows, from getting interviewed during the telecast to promoting his up coming shows. None of that happened on this night and King was nonplussed. He would accuse HBO of racism and he even threatened to take his fighters—including Trinidad—to another outlet.

There is talk of King starting his own boxing network and putting his fights on his own channel. HBO hasn't had much to say about the situation. They have seen these types of outbursts in the past. But what if King actually goes through on his threat?

But, then again, what if both sides kiss and make-up?

Right now, they don't know if they're coming or going.