

Floyd Mayweather – Too Good for His Own Good

Written by Joey Knish

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In dominating Arturo “Thunder” Gatti so thoroughly this past weekend in Atlantic City, Floyd Mayweather Jr. looked so good he may have eliminated nearly every potential opponent from his list of prospects.

Sure, any potential opponent for Mayweather could poke holes in Arturo Gatti as a limited boxer with little more than big power and a bigger heart. But the fact remains that “Pretty Boy” Floyd is still undefeated as a professional after 34 professional fights, and only Jose Luis Castillo has shown he belongs in the same ring as Mayweather.

At his best, the 28-year-old Mayweather is a slick boxing heavy puncher who uses both hands effectively, does everything well technically, displays deft footwork, tight defense, and has speed in abundance. Saturday night Gatti simply couldn't find the speedster, and it wasn't just because both his eyes were gradually swelling shut. Floyd beat Gatti to the punch for all 3-minutes in each of the 6 rounds the bout lasted and looked like he could have gone 15 rounds. His combinations flowed this past weekend as he would make his Canadian opponent miss, return fire with hard rights, hooks, jabs and rights again, then slide out of Gatti's range. Often times Mayweather hammered Gatti with flush right hands and enjoyed it so much he would double up, all without being hit in return.

Yes, Gatti was out of his league and in way over his head – but that was due to the talent of Floyd Mayweather.

Looking at the top of the 140-pound division there are only two fighters who appear remotely close to being able to challenge the Michigan native Mayweather. The two obvious names are IBF champion Ricky “The Hitman” Hatton and WBO kingpin Miguel Cotto – both of whom are undefeated.

Hatton is not so unknown as he was three weeks ago when he broke down and beat Kostya Tszyu, but is still largely unseen by the many in the boxing public. Any bout with Mayweather would be a mega-fight wherever it took place, but it would be interesting to see which fighter wanted to travel. Hatton has fought in Europe with Mayweather staying in the United States. Money could make the fight and, off his huge win over Tszyu and easily selling out over 22,000 seats for that fight, “The Hitman” meeting “Pretty Boy” in the United Kingdom would simply be a colossal event in looking at ticket sales. Pick your “football” stadium in England and it is almost a foregone conclusion that it would be sold-out.

As is often the case in the business of boxing, the most attractive matchups are not necessarily the ones that get made.

Puerto Rico's Miguel Cotto also comes with a undefeated resume, but it seems that everything he does well, Floyd Mayweather does just a little bit better. Junior definitely has an edge in speed, better defense and ring generalship, while the advantage in power may be a tossup. The

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24-0 Cotto is just a 5-year professional and at just 24 still has a learning curve to climb. HBO has worked with both Cotto and Mayweather so a potential deal might be easier to do, but trying to convince anyone that Cotto is ready may be a tougher task.

What makes Mayweather-Hatton attractive is that Hatton proved to be incredibly strong in pushing Kostya Tszyu all over the ring. Mayweather had his toughest outing against Castillo and “The Hitman” is bigger and stronger with a higher punch output than Jose Luis. We have seen Floyd Mayweather Jr. do just about everything in the ring, but we haven’t seen him with his back against the wall and forced to brawl. Bouts against the likes of Diego Corrales and Arturo Gatti were supposed to push Floyd where he had never been before. Instead both fights were one-sided shellackings.

Beyond the aforementioned fighters, the step down in class from the stakes champion Mayweather to the claiming ranks of the 140-pound division is a huge drop. “Pretty Boy” Floyd always wanted to be thought of, treated, and paid like the best. After his destruction of the highly capable Arturo Gatti, Mayweather showed he just may be the best fighter in the world today. The problem now is finding a worthy opponent so he can be paid like it.