

Ricardo Mayorga is Crazy Like a Fox

Written by Rick Folstad
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Check the readings on your “oddball-O-meter,” and see how Ricardo Mayorga stacks up. Look for his name up there near the top where it reads Mike Tyson, Jake LaMotta and Angel Manfredy.

It’s a pretty impressive list if you don’t mind being in the company of a few crazies who could also fight.

Because that’s what Mayorga is, a little crazy. Maybe that’s what makes him the fighter he is.

Four years ago, when he showed up from out of nowhere, most of us thought Mayorga was just a slight diversion in the welterweight division. He fought like a madman, then behaved like one, smoking and drinking his way into the hearts of rednecks everywhere.

Guys like that usually burn out overnight.

Mayorga was boxing’s answer to a one-hit wonder. After beating Andrew Lewis for the WBA welterweight title in March 2002, he took us on a strange ride, stopping for a cigarette break and chugging a few beers before scoring two wins over Vernon Forrest. He had a few more drags on his cigarettes, lost to Cory Spinks, smoked some more, beat Eric Mitchell in a 10-rounder, took a few puffs, chugged some more, moved up a couple weight classes, and then lost to Felix Trinidad in October of last year. He was stopped in the eighth round of a brutal fight. Shortly after that, he announced his retirement.

“Enough already,” Mayorga said. “No more. I’m out of boxing.”

He went on to say he was simply not continuing and had no need to continue.

“I have sufficient resources,” he said last October. “The sacrifice is a lot and I have been fighting since I was 11. So at 31 years of age, I seek peace.”

Apparently, “peace” isn’t all it’s cracked up to be. As retirements go in the fight game, his was a relatively short one.

Mayorga (27-5-1, 23 KOs) is scheduled to fight former IBF welterweight champ Michele Piccirillo (44-2, 28 KOs) for the vacant WBC super-welterweight title on Aug. 13 at the United Center in Chicago. And, as is Mayorga’s way, he’s not impressed with the other guy.

“We are planning for all (styles) that this gentleman might bring into the ring,” Mayorga said on a conference call this week. “I have seen tapes of this guy and I really don’t have a high opinion of him. I’m going to be able to run right over him. In my opinion, I can just look at his record. Basically, he is fighting guys that are stepping on grapes to make wine. He has not fought a guy of my caliber, and you will see that when I knock him out in two rounds.”

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Grapes? Wine? Oh, I get it. Piccirillo is from Italy. That crazy Ricardo.

Helping Mayorga knock the guy out in two rounds is trainer Yoel Judah, father of world welterweight champ Zab Judah.

“Ricardo is a very receptive guy and he picks up things well,” Judah said. “I’m just trying to show him little moves. He’s a helluva puncher and he’s always been able to take a punch. I’m showing him how to throw punches without getting hit. Mainly, I’m working on defense because everything else, he’s in the ballpark with: power, speed, movement and aggressiveness. He’s got everything. Sometimes, he likes to take two or three punches before getting in on the guy.”

Crazy.