

Boxing Buffet with Morales and Pacquiao

Written by Rick Folstad

Wednesday, 18 January 2006 19:00

I'm guessing the most expensive enchilada on the Las Vegas Strip might be the one Erik Morales gulps down on his way through the buffet line prior to the weigh-in for Saturday night's fight against Manny Pacquiao.

According to Pacquiao and the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Morales owes Pacquiao \$250,000 for every pound he weighs over the 130-pound super-featherweight limit.

Put in another perspective, if Morales comes in a pound over, that's the equivalent of awarding Pacquiao a nice, three-bedroom, ranch-style home in the suburbs. All bought and paid for.

If Morales comes in at a chubby 132 pounds, that's the same as signing over a six-bedroom home in a gated community in one of the better parts of town.

If he really balloons up and waddles in at 133 pounds, ask him if he likes to fish, because he's handing Pacquiao the keys to a two-story house on the water with a Grady White and twin outboards tied up to the dock out in back.

We call that incentive to make weight.

What a crazy game.

If I'm Erik Morales and I haven't seen 130 pounds since last March when I fought and beat Pacquiao the first time, I don't go near a stove, read a menu or look at a hot-dog stand until after Friday's weigh-in. I sleep with a bathroom scale under my pillow, shoot the pizza delivery guy, and if barfing will save me \$250,000, I'm jamming my fingers down my throat every minute I'm alone.

I don't smell food, look at it, listen to it cook or read about it in the paper.

If I still can't quite make 130 pounds, I have all the utensils removed from my room, including scissors, dinner knives and corkscrews. It's not that I'd try to hurt myself. I just don't want to have anything sharp around in case I start contemplating which toes I could get along without.

Room service? They're instructed not to take my calls.

As for Pacquiao, the same \$250,000 penalty applies to him, though he'll probably coast into 130 pounds. I'm guessing he has a tasty, full dinner on Thursday night and a light breakfast on Friday before the weigh-in.

If I'm Manny's trainer, I got him walking up to the scales for Friday's official weigh-in eating a chicken wing, sipping a Pepsi and letting out a good healthy belch just about the time he steps on the scale.

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What a mean game.

Despite the weight thing, Morales (48-3, 34 KOs) was suddenly moved over to the favorite's side of the betting slip earlier this week. Up until then, Pacquiao (40-3-2, 31 KOs) was a 7-5 favorite for their fight at the Thomas and Mack Center in Las Vegas (HBO, pay per view). As of the past few days, Morales was a 10-8 pick, which, in gambling parlance, means no one knows what the hell is going to happen.

Meanwhile, Pacquiao said he likes the idea of being the underdog. But when it's this close, there really isn't a favorite. That's why the odds shift.

By fight time, expect it to be pick 'em.

If there's a kicker in this whole thing, it might be the buffet line, or its disappearance. If the struggle to reach 130 pounds is as tough as it sounds for Morales, he might pay for his weight loss in the later rounds of the fight.

If he decides he doesn't really need that boat and that house on the water, he could come in heavy. And if he does, Pacquiao will earn every extra dollar he gets.