

Marketing Mayorga – What Now?

Written by Joey Knish
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Saturday night in Las Vegas Ricardo Mayorga was completely outclassed, not only in the ring, for the second time in his past three fights.

When he shook the boxing world back in January 2003 by claiming the WBC and WBA welterweight titles from Vernon Forrest, the free-swinging foul-mouthed Nicaraguan gained the affection of those boxing fans who took to his brawn and brash attitude. Technically Mayorga made up for his shortcomings by winning crowds and bouts by simply being tougher than his opponent.

At the time tough was enough, but brutal defeats to Felix “Tito” Trinidad and now the “Golden Boy” Oscar De La Hoya prove that the packaging of “El Matador” was far superior to the product.

On the wrapper it said that Mayorga was a hungry fighter from the streets of Nicaragua who defied the laws of society and boxing by doing things his way. “His way” included cigarettes and beer as part of a semi-regular training regime that started weeks – so we were told to believe – before bouts as opposed to months prior. He had no respect for his opponents or the history of the sweet science. Punches were thrown from wherever his hands happened to be at the time, and if they landed it was impressive, if not, there was another bomb on the way.

On the inside we know that Mayorga’s lack of technique exposed us to a sloppy fighter who was saved by heavy hands, a will to win and a stubborn chin. In the end disrespect for his opponents cost him as the constant trash talking always awakened the giant within his adversary. Insulting a person’s family is always in bad taste and the lasting impression of Mayorga getting beat down by both Trinidad and De La Hoya has many feeling he got his just desserts.

Of course losing to “Tito” and the Oscar is nothing to be ashamed of – he was beaten in both those bouts both in terms of boxing ability and pure punching. “El Matador” found that both opponents could hit hard as well, and the difference in skill level was insurmountable. Mayorga was also outboxed by Cory Spinks in December 2003 and let’s not forget that he was defeated three times prior to that fighting mid-level opponents in Costa Rica and Nicaragua. He isn’t a great boxer but he was gifted in other ways.

Heavy hands and a great chin are not things that can be taught in a gym or made. Mayorga was given a chin and power and he has made the most of those two assets to get him the title opportunities that he has been granted (with the influence of Don King Promotions). So far Ricardo has made the most of his opportunities (no, he hasn’t won at the highest level) by parlaying his bravado into paydays and always gave the media colorful quotes. He marketed himself as a tough guy who respected nobody and believed that people came to see him. During a pre-fight event prior to the De La Hoya deliverance, Mayorga told the “Golden Boy” that he was the champion and Oscar was “nobody.” Either Mayorga has a warped sense of

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reality or he is such a great self-promoter that he fooled himself.

Entering the ring this Saturday night Ricardo Mayorga looked far less like a “matador” and much more like the “bull” that was being led out to its predictable fate. As cameras panned on the Managua native he looked solemn, as if even he wasn’t buying his own bravado any more. The end was near, and any flicker of hope that may have fluttered within was doused when De La Hoya dropped Mayorga with a wicked left hook in the opening round. Oscar wanted to show that he could beat Mayorga at his own game in order to completely take him out of the fight and then break him down in a methodical manner. Each round thereafter the opener was like watching a slow walk to the guillotine aside from brief moments of resistance shown in the third.

So what now?

He clearly can’t beat the best and now is just one of the rest. At 32 years of age there is no great makeover in the works in store for Ricardo Mayorga. He is what he is and won’t change his spots. Most fight fans have already learned to tune out his pre-fight verbal diarrhea and his professional wrestling brand of appeal has passed its expiration date.

Big paydays are officially a thing of the past and even Don King may have grown tired of Mayorga coming off the recent ransom requests Mayorga made the week leading up the De La Hoya clash. King can find another hungry fighter to grab shoppers’ attention now that Mayorga has fallen to the bottom shelf of the supermarket aisle.

We were fooled more than once that Ricardo Mayorga could deliver on his profanity laced promises. Having come up empty again it will be hard to convince fight fans to buy what he is selling ever again.