

Mayweather to De La Hoya: “No trainer can guarantee a victory”

Written by David A. Avila
Monday, 22 January 2007 19:00

After six years of honing East L.A.’s Oscar De La Hoya into a speedier and more defensive-minded prizefighter, it looks like Floyd Mayweather Sr. will not be in the Golden Boy’s corner when he fights Floyd Mayweather Jr.

“Money is the root of all evil,” said Mayweather Sr. “There was no problem training Oscar to fight my son until I asked for more money.”

De La Hoya is poised to announce who will train him for his mega showdown with Mayweather Jr. on May 5 at the MGM Grand. It is expected to come this week while he is back in his hometown of Los Angeles. It appears that the senior Mayweather will not be training De La Hoya for the upcoming fight.

For that fight, De La Hoya will make more than \$25 million and Mayweather Jr. upwards of \$12 million. It all depends on the pay-per-view buys.

Though Mayweather Sr. began training De La Hoya following the first defeat by Shane Mosley back in June 2000, the East Los Angeles prizefighter, who is undoubtedly the most successful in history, seems intent on going to battle without him.

Mayweather says it’s about money. The 53-year-old trainer said he was offered \$500,000 up front and another \$500,000 if De La Hoya wins.

He won’t accept it.

“I’m not Houdini,” Mayweather said. “I’m not the one who is going to be in the ring. I can’t fight for him.”

The offer from Golden Boy Promotions according to Mayweather, disturbs the trainer who also guides Laila Ali, Chad Dawson, Panchito Bojado and many others.

“No trainer can guarantee a victory,” he said.

While preparing Dawson for his upcoming challenge against Tomasz Adamek of New Jersey by way of Poland, Mayweather walked over to explain his reasons for not accepting a half now and half later deal from Golden Boy Promotions.

“I put my work in. Why take my money?” Mayweather said about the deal that would give him another \$500,000 only if De La Hoya wins. “If he (De La Hoya) wins or loses he’s going to keep his money. But why keep my money if he loses?”

Mayweather fought professionally from 1974 to 1990 against some of the best welterweights during that time, including a fight against Sugar Ray Leonard who was two years removed from

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winning the gold medal at the 1976 Olympics in Montreal. Though he lost by technical knockout in the 10th round, Mayweather proved to be a worthy adversary for the future superstar. He began training professional boxers when he retired as an active fighter.

Mayweather’s younger brother Roger dominated the junior lightweight division for a spell and later moved into the junior welterweight division. He now trains Mayweather Jr. but is currently incarcerated for assault charges.

Mayweather Jr. became the second generation of Mayweather professional boxers. And with knowledge passed on by his father and uncles, he quickly became an amateur boxing star. Though he lost in the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, many felt he won.

“That was all politics,” said Mayweather Jr. who did not earn a medal during the summer games that year. “I didn’t lose. They didn’t want me to win.”

Once he entered the professional ranks, Mayweather Jr.’s talent quickly gained him recognition as he rose up the junior lightweight rankings. An eventual showdown with WBC junior lightweight titleholder Genaro “Chicanito” Hernandez in 1998 proved to be a one-sided affair in Mayweather’s favor.

“He was just too fast for my brother,” said Rudy Hernandez, who trained his brother for that fight that proved to be the last for Chicanito. “Floyd’s quickness is too much.”

Few felt Mayweather Jr. would ever rise above the lightweight division, especially after fighting in 2002 against Mexico’s Jose Luis Castillo, a fight that most fans felt the Mexican boxer won though the judges scored it in wide margins for Mayweather.

“I took him lightly,” Mayweather confessed last October about his first encounter with Castillo. “But I showed what I could do when I fought him again.”

Mayweather dominated Castillo with his speed in the second fight eight months later.

“He was too quick,” Castillo said. “I lost.”

Mayweather Jr. moved up to junior welterweight in 2004 and simultaneously issued a challenge to De La Hoya or Winky Wright.

Many scoffed at the challenge as a publicity stunt. But since beating several junior welterweights then moving on to the welterweight division and humbling both Zab Judah and Carlos Baldomir, the laughter has turned to admiration.

Even Mayweather Sr. acknowledges it will be a daunting task for De La Hoya to beat junior.

“He’s not fighting a paper champion, he’s fighting a Mayweather,” said Mayweather Sr. of De La Hoya. “You can’t get enough arsenal. You need the package.”

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Mayweather Sr. believes only he can prepare De La Hoya against his son's assortment of punches and defensive schemes.

“I'm not saying Oscar can't beat little Floyd without me,” he says. “But with me he can learn everything he needs to know.”

The Las Vegas trainer believes De La Hoya's naturally bigger body, punching power and experience make him a cut above any other fighter his son has ever faced.

“Oscar has got speed, he's a bigger guy and he can punch. But he's got to land,” Mayweather said. “It's how bad he (De La Hoya) wants to win. There's not a trainer I can recommend.”

Jack Mosley, father and trainer of Shane Mosley, has entered the list of recommended trainers for De La Hoya. Others mentioned are Freddie Roach, Emanuel Steward, and Nacho Beristain who trains Rafael and Juan Manuel Marquez. The latter will be in town with De La Hoya to announce a press conference for an upcoming match between Marquez and Marco Antonio Barrera.

Could that also be the day they announce Beristain, who also trained the great Ricardo “Finito” Lopez, as De La Hoya's next trainer? Or could it be Mosley?

Mayweather Sr. says there is no bitterness toward De La Hoya should the current WBC junior middleweight titleholder choose to go another route.

“I appreciate what he did for me and I hope he appreciates what I did for him. There are no bad feelings. It's business,” Mayweather said. “It's in God's hands.”