

Now that Golden Boy and Top Rank seem to have settled their dispute (at least long enough to cash in on a mutually lucrative bout), Manny Pacquiao (44-3-2, 35 KOs) is lined up to battle Marco Antonio Barrera (63-5, 42 KOs) on October 6 in Las Vegas. This will be the first fight under the new arrangement between Top Rank and Golden Boy which allows for some split promotional work. We can only hope that the new settlement will lead to a future where the best matches are made without consideration given to a fighter's promotional affiliation.

---On a side note, I can't help but find it hilarious that, in a way, Manny's double-dealing (he signed contracts with both) inadvertently helped solve this dispute by lending a sense of urgency to settling the matter. PacMan's actions were either slick as a snake or completely naïve, but whatever his intentions were, it seems that justice has been served to the victim: the fans.

But nobody reads this page because they enjoy legal issues. Anytime fighters like PacMan, 28, and Barrera, 33, take the ring it's big news in these parts. Back in 2003, I'm sure that many of you remember Pacquiao's 11th round TKO victory. According to PacMan's trainer Freddie Roach, "Barrera has been wanting a rematch for a couple of years."

Several weeks ago there was heated discussion here on our message boards pertaining to whom Manny should take on next: The main candidates were MAB, 33-year-old Juan Manuel Marquez (47-3-1, 35 KOs), and Joan Guzman (27-0, 17 KOs). The most popular pick seemed to be JMM who scored a unanimous decision over the Baby Faced Assassin for his WBC Super Featherweight title back in March. JMM also battled PacMan to a draw in 2004 despite tasting the canvas three times in the first round.

So why Barrera?

Roach dismissed talk of JMM making outrageous payment split demands (though they possibly still played a part). To Roach the equation was simple: "Barrera draws a bigger audience than Marquez," he noted. Top Rank and Golden Boy might be collaborating, but hell hasn't frozen over in its entirety. This is still boxing and it's still a business. If it makes dollars, it makes sense. That grim reality holds, but this is still a great match-up.

Roach pointed out that this could be Barrera's last fight and that he expects to see the Mexican veteran at his best. "Barrera's durable. He's a tough guy and you can't take anybody too lightly in this game," said Roach.

He believes that Manny has arrived as a two fisted fighter since their first match-up (and some of PacMan's opponents would probably swear he's tri-fisted), but still sees a battle. "I'm sure Barrera would love to go out a winner, but I believe we will get to him late," he predicted.

As for Marquez?

Roach Talks PacMan, Barrera, Marquez, Guzman

Written by Mike Lynch
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“After this fight, we have no problem taking on Marquez,” claimed Roach, while he also admitted that, “His style gave us some problems in the first fight.”

For now, JMM is slated to square off against Jorge Barrios (47-3-1, 34 KOs) on September 15. If he and Manny win, as they are expected to, that would make for a highly anticipated rematch.

But what about Guzman?

Roach quipped, “If you listen to Floyd Mayweather, Sr., he’s invincible. But he’s a real strong guy and might be one of the toughest fights out there.”

But he’s also not a big enough name to make sense for PacMan at this point. Fans might be frothing for such a match-up, but Roach’s sentiment was that Guzman’s got to work his way up a little more before he gets a shot at the Filipino southpaw.

You know what they say in boxing: If it don’t make dollars it don’t make sense. Or something like that...

Speedbag: Roach also noted that Pacquiao would consider a match-up with Humberto Soto (42-5-2, 26 KOs) in the future. Manny was in the house when Soto KO’d PacMan’s younger brother, Bobby, on June 9 at Madison Square Garden. Despite the 5 losses, Soto is well-seasoned and unbeaten in the ring since he lost a 2002 decision to Kevin Kelley. Apparently, Manny wouldn’t mind exacting some revenge for his little bro.....Pacquiao will begin training camp with Roach on August 1 in Hollywood.