

## Pacquiao and Barrera II: "Will To Win"

Written by David A. Avila  
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A love fest happened in the luxurious Beverly Hills Hotel to announce the pairing of Manny Pacquiao and Marco Antonio Barrera along with a public showing of solidarity between Golden Boy Promotions and Top Rank on Friday.

"Love is flying in the air" said Oscar De La Hoya, the president of Golden Boy. "This is history in the making."

The promoters were friendly, the fighters were generous with admiration for each other and an overall good feeling of cheer was everywhere.

Something was sorely missing and it suddenly hit like a Pacquiao left hand: the Filipino press was not in force in Beverly Hills, instead most had already settled in Sacramento for the big showdown between Mexico and the Philippines.

No matter. After Saturday the final showdown between the two boxing crazy countries will be Pacquiao versus Barrera in the fight dubbed the "Will to Win" at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino on Oct. 6. Tickets are now on sale.

"Marco Antonio Barrera is a very smart fighter, a good fighter," said Pacquiao on Friday. "He said he was not at his best. I want to beat him at his best."

That's Pacquiao for you. Whatever challenge comes his way he's willing to prove in the ring that he's better than any other fighter alive.

Barrera, who lost the first showdown with Pacquiao in 2003, says that was an aberration.

"I'm the typical Mexican who says you can beat me once but you can't beat me two times," said Barrera. "In the first fight I was the star and he came with hunger. Now he is the star and I come with hunger."

Barrera said he will retire after one year. But this will be his last fight against an elite opponent. After October he will fight one or two "easy fights" then "leave this beautiful sport."

It spells the end of an era for Mexican fighters from the 90s.

Last week Erik Morales lost a decision to David Diaz in an attempt to win a world title in a fourth weight division. He was unsuccessful and now plans to retire.

"I congratulate Erik Morales and thank him for giving me the opportunities to fight him," said Barrera. "I felt he won his fight against David Diaz."

Only Juan Manuel Marquez remains of the Mexican Triumvirate who ruled the featherweights

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and struck fear in opponents.

Now it's Pacman.

But Pacquiao predicts a difficult fight in October.

"It's not going to be an easy fight because Barrera is a very smart fighter," said Pacquiao. "He has a good jab and has a lot of experience."

De La Hoya agrees with Pacquiao's assessment.

"Marco Antonio Barrera is a future Hall of Famer," De La Hoya said. "When somebody counts him out he proves them wrong. He does want revenge."

The Filipino superstar carefully makes his prediction: "I won't say I'm going to knock him out. But I will win the fight."

Now the love fest is over.