

Could It Be Macho Time Again?

Written by Raymond Markarian
Sunday, 13 July 2008 19:00

After a three year hiatus and a boxing career that has lasted nearly three decades, the proud Puerto Rican fighting legend Hector "Macho" Camacho is making his return to the ring on Friday, July 18th, at the Reliant Arena in Houston, Texas.

Camacho feels like he is two fights away from a showdown with the boxing elite.

At 46 years young, does he still have what it takes to compete or is he just another crazed veteran that doesn't know when to hang up the gloves? The Macho Man speaks of his hoped-for resurrection here.

RM: You're fighting Perry Ballard on July 18th, how is your prep going for that fight?

HMC: Well. I have been training for eight to nine months. It is not like before you know because before I was fighting regularly but not training as hard as I am now. Being that I have been off for three years, I went back to the gym and I have been training everyday. I am a student of boxing again. I'm sparring everyday, training every day. I am going back to being a student of the boxing game, and it's fun, enjoyable, and I am 46 years old but I am feeling like I am 26 years old. So I am feeling great.

RM: You were saying that you're going back to being a student of the boxing game, when did you stop?

HMC: I am back to being a student you know. In other words, I am running everyday, I'm resting, and I'm eating well, training well. You know before when I used to fight three or four times a year I took a lot more chances. There would be times when I would say, 'Oh I'll skip a day,' or 'I'll skip training today.' So, before I would skip training in the gym. But now with my discipline, I have become a student of the game and I am spending more time in the gym and it makes me a better fighter.

RM: Well, that's great Hector, but what gives you the desire to keep fighting?

HMC: Well, it is something that I have been doing all of my life. You know, I created my own style and I created my own habits. I mean, it's something that I love to do. I am not doing it because I need money or because I lack money. I do it because fighting is in my character. Much of my personality is in my boxing so that is why I am doing it.

RM: Alright, let's take a step back and talk about your career. Who was your toughest opponent?

HMC: Well I would have to say my ex-wife, you know...

RM: Your ex-wife?

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HMC: Yeah, that lady, she got me for a lot of things. Other than that, I fought guys like Oscar De la Hoya, Felix Trinidad, Chavez, a lot of big, big, fights. I fought Boom Boom Mancini, Pazienza, and Roberto Duran. I mean, I fought them all. And it's good now because at 46 years old, I haven't really been abused with punches. It makes me feel like a young boy.

RM: What are your expectations? Do you want to win a world title?

HMC: My expectations are to pick up a title right now, which I am fighting for on the 18th, a junior middleweight championship, and there is another title on the line. So basically there are two titles on the line. Also, hopefully (a victory) will give me something as leverage with any of the fighters out there that are in the top ratings to allow me to make a big payday or make a big showdown with somebody. It means I have something to play with. This by far is important to me because I will be going for my tenth world title. I will be one of the only ones to be going for their tenth world title. Besides Oscar De la Hoya, I think Oscar De la Hoya has nine too.

RM: That's good. So Macho Man, what is your greatest achievement in the ring?

HMC: Probably winning nine titles. I mean, my entire career is an accomplishment. I defeated Sugar Ray Leonard. I beat Pazienza. I fought in 85 professional fights and suffered really just three losses. The other two losses were just bull, you know, taking a point here and there, or a disqualification, that's bull. So I really only have three losses in my career. So that right there is a great accomplishment.

RM: That's true. But do you have any regrets?

HMC: No, not really, you win and you lose. Everything is a learning process. I mean, I came from nobody to become one of the legends of boxing. You know, that says a lot. I wasn't asking for this. I came behind Sugar Ray, behind Muhammad Ali. I wasn't really prepared but I went through with it. You know, I fought Sugar Ray, he was in my era. So I often say I came after Muhammad Ali. That's really great. I love it man, its macho time!

RM: Hey, you did have a unique style, I'll give you that. I loved your fight with Pazienza in the early 1990s that was great.

HMC: Thank you, that's when it was, February 1990.

RM: Any bouts that you wish took place, but didn't come off?

HMC: I wanted to fight Pernell Whitaker and I wanted to fight Meldrick Taylor. But other than that, I fought anybody and everybody. But now that I am coming back, I am putting myself on the spot. If I do well, I will be looking for a fight with Pretty Boy Floyd, he is still out there, or probably a fight with De la Hoya, he is still out there. But it all depends on my performance and how well I perform. We'll see if I have what it takes to take on a Pretty Boy Floyd or Oscar De la Hoya.

RM: I'm not sure if fighting those guys is a possibility. But you never know.

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HMC: Well, I am sure I am going to win this fight. And I am sure it's going to help me build towards being one of the greatest of the greats. Beating fighters like De la Hoya, Pretty Boy Floyd, or any of those boys out there motivates me. I come here to take over. I come here to make a statement. You know, like Muhammad Ali did. When Ali went to Africa to fight George Foreman no one thought he could do that. But he came back and beat George Foreman. So I am trying to do the same thing. I am here to do the impossible. I mean I've fought everybody in my time and it's still my time because I am still fighting. So, it means I am going after guys like Floyd Mayweather, Oscar De la Hoya, or any of those people out there. You know in boxing, you win and you lose. I lost to Oscar De la Hoya. I lost to Trinidad. I lost to Chavez, yes. But I am back. You know, Bob Arum was talking about having a big fight card with Hector Jr. fighting Chavez Jr. and Hector Sr. fighting Chavez Sr. They are going to call it the "Timeless Field." So, I think I have to go get through this event first before I go and fight a really big fight again, which is great.

RM: When is the Chavez/Camacho fight supposed to happen?

HMC: Well, Bob Arum hadn't confirmed it with me yet. I spoke with him about a month ago back at the boxing Hall of Fame. He brought it to my attention. So I think it going to happen around November 1st. My son and Chavez Jr. fought on the 12th and I fight on the 18th. We all have to win to make it happen.

RM: Wow, that would be interesting.

HMC: Yes, it will be.

RM: Let me ask you this. What influenced you to be a boxer growing up?

HMC: Well, I grew up in the martial arts. I received a third degree black belt. Then I turned amateur in boxing at about 15. You had to be one year older to be an amateur but I kind of sneaked in. Then I won three gold gloves and some amateur championships in 1980. But my father is the one that encouraged me to be a boxer and I have been doing well ever since.

RM: So I am hearing that Angelo Dundee is going to be training you for this fight on July 18th.

HMC: Yes, that is definitely great too. He is a great inspiration to my comeback you know. Just having somebody to help me with his history is a blessing and an honor. I love Angelo. I love the whole idea.

RM: So when do you think your career is going to be over Hector?

HMC: I am taking it by a fight by fight basis. It is history in the making for me now you know. I will do well. People that enjoy watching me fight know I am not here to get hurt or get punchy. I am here to win and I know I will do great.

RM: So when your career is over, what do you want people to say about Hector "Macho" Camacho?

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HMC: He was one of the greatest fighters in his era. That is a true fact.

RM: Do you have anything else you would like to say to your fans?

HMC: It's Macho time again!

RM: Thank you for your time Macho.

HMC: Amen, Papi.