

## Mosley/Mayorga: The Good, Bad, and Crazy Ugly

Written by Phil Woolever

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THE WIDE RANGING BORDERS OF CLASS - There are many ways this weekend's Shane Mosley - Ricardo Mayorga duke out might unfold.

Some observers had a "what's the point" type attitude when the fight was announced, but what makes it a far more compelling matchup for me is the wide range of definitely possible scenarios anywhere from Mosley giving a textbook lesson on countering and neutralizing awkward power to Mayorga breaking down and smashing through a more formal opponent's skill set.

Then again, maybe "El Matador" will get up and dance on under-rated toes while "Sugar" comes out with heavy leather blazing more than usual.

"Actually, I was looking for Miguel Cotto again or Antonio Margarito," said Mosley, 44-5 (37). "But if I have to go past Mayorga, I don't have any problem with that."

"Mosley is in for a bad surprise," promised Mayorga, 29-6-1 (23). "He's nothing special to me."

Boxing's version of the old Sergio Leone/Clint Eastwood spaghetti westerns is heading to the Home Depot Center, mystery style. Will it be the good, the bad, or the ugly?

The 37 year old Mosley and Mayorga, 34, are both listed at a height of 5'9. Besides that and years of performing at the height of the game, the soon colliding pair have displayed little in common, with a radically varied approach to their craft.

With Mosley, you can always count on a class act and a display of optimal technique.

With Mayorga, well, let's just say the boorish acts are seldom boring, and he bores in on opponents with all he's got. At the very least, the Nicaraguan strongman is consistent in the important marketing matters of unpredictability and balls-out attack.

Examining comparative common denominators could be misleading. Relative performances against Oscar de la Hoya point to Mosley big time, while Mayorga tamed Vernon Forrest, who took a pair over Mosley.

Not to say Mosley isn't a strong puncher, but he might be wisest to take a page from Corey Spinks's game plan and play "matador" himself to Mayorga's raging bull, which will probably appear by the final press conference. Mayorga psyched out then ruined the once formidable Andrew "Six Heads" Lewis in just a few minutes.

Mosley doesn't pound people into despair, he gives them boxing tutorials. Mosley may always be cast as the good guy, but he's proven he can be as bad as need be inside the strands.

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Mayorga seems generally volatile, but has also demonstrated restraint, humor, and earnest likeability. One minute he's enraged with gutter venom, others (far fewer) he's GQ dapper and humbly polite.

"He knows he can't outbox me," said Mosley confidently. "I'm not sure what to expect but I know I'm ready and I'll do whatever I have to do."

"I know I'm going to win and win big," said Mayorga with fire in his eyes. "And Mosley knows it too."

It could be a good fight, very good, if both men show up in the shape they were in against faded Fernando Vargas. It got ugly for Vargas against both men. One would have to figure each man's form against the "Ferocious" one is probably about as close to prime level as either has left, though it's hard to gauge how much Mosley may have taken out of Cotto.

While it's generally true that styles make fights, that's never a guarantee on what kind of fight we'll get.

This bout could turn out either way. Realistic handicapping indicates it should go the distance, but something says it won't. Mosley's listed four inch reach advantage stands out as the most crucial factor.

Thus, the most likely conclusion we envision has Mosley's slick speed and combination punching carrying the day, quite possibly ending matters when the referee rescues Mayorga, dazed and bleeding but never surrendering. Let's put that possibility at around 70%.

Mayorga could show up anvil hard to absorb and resist Mosley's stings until forcing him around successfully like Cotto did. That's a slim 20%.

Following the conservative disclaimer pattern many Vegas sports books took once they went corporate many moons ago, we'll leave a 10% safety net chance that anything goes, as in disqualification, technical draw, no contest, etc.

For those who require a call set in stone, let's say Mosley by TKO at 2:11 of the tenth.

The uglier the fight, the worse it will get for Mosley, if not the audience. But it really seems that whatever artistry or madness ensues, most folks viewing are in for a very good time.