Oscar De La Hoya doesn't want to just defeat Manny Pacquiao. He wants to destroy him.

Anything less, he said Monday from his training camp at Big Bear, Calif., would be a loss even if his hand is raised in victory. For a guy who is 1-5 in his biggest fights (stopped Julio Cesar Chavez in their first fight, lost to Felix Trinidad, Shane Mosley twice, Bernard Hopkins and Floyd Mayweather, Jr.), it seemed not only a presumptuous position to be taking but more than a bit demanding on himself considering that all but the Chavez fight went to a decision.

"I'll be extremely disappointed if this does not end in a knockout,'' De La Hoya said of his showdown with the little big man widely seen as boxing's best pound-for-pound fighter. "It would be a total disaster.''

A total disaster? No, a total disaster would be if De La Hoya leaves the MGM Grand Garden Arena without a victory of some sort for the sixth straight time in a big fight.

De La Hoya, of course, is not pondering that possibility. Although he insists he believes Pacquiao will be stronger and more powerful at welterweight than he was at featherweight and super featherweight even though he's moving up from lightweight after only one fight at 135 pounds, he seemed to make clear that he is among the many who feel he will dominate a man who began his career fighting 24 pounds below where De La Hoya did, a range that has continued as both have moved up in weight throughout their careers.

In fairness, De La Hoya is fighting at 147 for the first time in seven years himself, having last done it against Arturo Gatti long before he moved on to junior middleweight and then middleweight titles. His new trainer, Nacho Beristain, expressed concern last week that De La Hoya had actually gotten down to 147 faster than he would have hoped and had even slipped below it, to 145. He said he had ordered changes in De La Hoya's diet and conditioning regimen to prevent him coming in too weak but De La Hoya insisted Monday he was right where he wanted to be, which meant in shape to destroy Pacquiao.

"I've been at 145 for several weeks,'' De La Hoya said. "Weight has been no problem. The first couple of weeks I tried to make it I did feel a little bit light headed and weak. Now that I'm used to it I feel very strong and fast. I'm thinking about going to 140 for my next fight. The weight has been easy.''

One assumed that was mere joshing on De La Hoya's part but with him you never know, except for one thing. You know he wants that knockout to confirm to the world that all those previous and often disputed losses by decision were the result of unsightly judging, the kind of Las Vegas judging he knows he can only avoid by ending Pacquiao's night before he's been allowed to work a full shift.

"Big or small what matters is if you have the chin and the heart and the desire,'' De La Hoya

said of the size and possible strength differences between the two of them. “I was able to move up (in weight) and be successful in my career because I had the chin, I had the heart and I can fight.’’

De La Hoya was saying this as a way of assuring doubters that Pacquiao had the same qualities, yet the way it came out it seemed more like he was implying he had proven he could go up and down in weight and win and now we would see if Pacquiao had the same qualities.

He noted his own past stamina problems as well and admitted those issues plus coming down seven pounds in weight (from the junior middleweight class he’d been fighting since being stopped by Hopkins) obviously raised questions and doubts about him as well.

But he quickly added he has convinced at least one person well-versed in boxing that his own rapid weight loss has not resulted in a power outage as well.

“Coming down in weight is a big issue,’’ De La Hoya said. “I don’t know how my body will react come fight night. But from the looks on (former world champion) Daniel Zaragoza’s face I don’t think I’m losing any power. He’s holding the mitts for me.’’

Hitting the mitts is not the same as hitting Pacquiao however. This is true for several reasons, not the least of them being that the mitts don’t hit back. Pacquiao certainly figures to do that but that actually is what De La Hoya claims he’s hoping for.

In his mind, the stoppage he craves will be made easier the more Pacquiao comes after him. Since relentless pursuit and a constant search for knockouts have been a large part of what has made Pacquiao a legend in the Phillipines and has him widely considered to be the best boxer in the world, De La Hoya assumes he will be facing someone who comes to fight.

If he does, boxing’s Golden Boy thinks he will finally leave a Las Vegas arena after a big fight with his hand raised and, in this case, Manny Pacquiao’s head lowered and his vision blurry.

“Look I’ve had problems with strictly boxers in the past,’’ De La Hoya said. “If you look at my losses they were against the likes of Shane Mosley, (Floyd) Mayweather and Bernard Hopkins. Strictly boxers. Slick boxers. That kind of style irritates me a bit.

“But if you are the kind of fighter who is going to come at me, throw punches full speed, stand in front of me…I welcome it. I open the door and let him into my home.’’

Clearly that is what Oscar De La Hoya believes he has done. He has let into his home a great champion who will come to Las Vegas not to box him but to fight him. A champion, he thinks, ripe not just for the taking but for the concussing.

If he’s right, De La Hoya says it will not be his final fight. If he’s wrong, who knows but history says that would all but assure a return to the ring for the 35-year-old, six-time world champion because they never want to leave on their shield, believing not only that this is unsightly but also counter to their destiny.

Either way, his aim on Dec. 6 is clear. It is not simply to win a boxing match. It is to dominate a big fight in a way he has not since he faced Chavez the first time 12 years ago, when he was 23 years old and his opponent was a 34-year-old grand champion just as self-assured as De La Hoya is today.

Will Dec. 6 be different than that night? Will the young lion, Pacquiao, be stilled in a way De La Hoya was not? Or will De La Hoya inflict his will on Pacquiao in the same way he did on Julio Cesar Chavez even though he is now on the same side of the calendar as Chavez was that night 12 years ago while at 29 Pacquiao is clearly in his prime?

No one can know such things but one matter is beyond dispute - Oscar De La Hoya is not prone to bold predictions. He fell short of that Monday afternoon but suggesting that anything less than a knockout victory would be a “total disaster’’ for him seemed to make clear where he stands.

Now we must wait until Dec. 6 to see where Manny Pacquiao stands - or if he’s still standing when that night ends.