

## Shane Returns To Pound For Pound List (PT. 1)

Written by David A. Avila

Tuesday, 27 January 2009 19:00

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Can you say Pound for Pound?

Sugar Shane Mosley's decisive victory over Antonio "The Tijuana Tornado" to more than one observer brought back memories of the feats of a guy named Sugar Ray Robinson and also stamps the Pomona fighter as worthy of a ranking on the mythical list.

"You have to go back to Sugar Ray Robinson to find a boxer that kept coming back and beating guys he was not supposed to beat," said Armando Muniz, a former welterweight challenger himself in the 1960s and 1970s. "That was incredible what he did tonight."

Back in the 1950s it was Robinson who kept coming back from defeat with victory after victory until the chains of time finally wore him down. He had his moments against Carmen Basilio, Randy Turpin, Gene Fullmer and Bobo Olson who all beat him but also tasted defeat against the ageing middleweight.

Now we have Mosley kicking age in its teeth with a display of boxing prowess that wowed even the most hard-bitten boxers, boxing fans and boxing critics. It was a win for the ages.

Let's paint a picture of what Los Angeles was like on Saturday, the morning of the big fight that most boxing experts felt would be a one-sided drubbing of the Pomona fighter by the WBA titleholder Antonio Margarito.

More than a few hundred insisted that since Mosley was beaten by Miguel Cotto (in a very close contest), and since Cotto was destroyed by Margarito, it made sense to figure Margarito would easily beat Mosley. Maybe even destroy the proud 37-year-old Californian.

A few weeks ago while at Margarito's training camp the Mexican fighter was very careful about predicting a win. He insisted that the fight would be the hardest of his career because of "Mosley's experience" and the toughness he's shown in every fight. Margarito knew what he was talking about.

You see, Margarito trained in the same gyms as Mosley and sparred on occasion with the same guys as Mosley, and he knew that the Pomona speedster was more than proficient at fighting the inside Mexican style of prizefighting. But maybe he felt age would prevent Mosley from staying inside. Bad decision.

### **Weigh-in**

Mosley may have won the fight on Friday afternoon during the weigh-in when Margarito stepped on the scale at the Nokia Theater and weighed a mere 145 pounds. The first thing that went through my mind and others during the announcement of Margarito's weight was "the Oscar De La Hoya syndrome" where he left everything in his training camp.

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Mosley stepped on the scale and was two ounces over. No big deal. He just waited 20 minutes and the weight was gone.

As the two fighters stepped next to each other to pose it seemed Margarito was more gaunt than usual. Mosley looked strong.

De La Hoya's poor showing against Manny Pacquiao had been discussed with both Mosley and Margarito during their preflight press conference back in early December. Both said the East L.A. fighter was too weak and had over-trained. This past weekend history repeated itself.

It's not to say that a prime Margarito would have beaten Mosley, just like a prime De La Hoya may not have beaten Pacman either. But they might not have looked so bad in the ring.

Later that Friday night I drove to a fight card in Montebello and spoke to numerous boxing writers, boxers and trainers. All were surprised about the 145 pounds too. The common question was: "why so light?"

As I waited for the weigh-in to conclude Robert "The Ghost" Guerrero and his father walked over to talk about their fight tomorrow. Guerrero told me he actually ate three meals on Thursday and had also eaten breakfast before jumping on the scale. He couldn't believe how easy it was for him to fight at the higher junior lightweight division.

"I feel real strong," said Guerrero.

Another fighter who said hello was little Luis Tapia, a fighter I had met before his pro debut in Las Vegas last summer. That day he stepped in against junior middleweight Joseph Judah who towered over him and nearly dropped him. He told me he put some weights in his pockets to make the extra weight so he could fight. He did it again in Montebello last November. This time he was going to fight Brian Ramirez, a nice kid that Margarito manages. Both would fight each other at lightweight. Tapia weighed 130 and a half. That is his fighting weight. He was happy this time because he knew he had a real chance to win against somebody who only weighed 135 pounds, not 152 pounds.

### Montebello

At the Friday night fight card were boxers Rico Hoya and Joell Godfrey, who are part of the fifth season Contender reality television show now on Versus TV on Wednesdays. Hoya trains in California now. Another boxer from the area on the show is Deon Elam. It's a pretty good lineup of boxers and probably the best since season 1. It plays at 7 p.m.

That night in the main event super middleweight Fernando Zuniga hit Danny Z flush on the chin about eight times in the first two rounds and quickly realized why nobody has ever stopped the Russian boxer. He's got a great chin. For the first time Zuniga was on his bicycle popping jabs and moving out of range of Z's big right hand. Zuniga won by decision. Kaliesha West, a top ranked bantamweight who was sitting next to me, said Z looked like Wolverine of the X-Men. He sure did.

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A few other boxers attended the show. One was Roberto Garcia, a little known but dangerous welterweight who resembles Pipino Cuevas and hits like him too. He was there with his pretty wife Nana to take in the fights. Kingsley Ikeke was there and boisterous as usual.

After the long boxing show in Montebello, I headed back to Riverside to hurry up and go to sleep. I had to get home early so that I could return to Los Angeles for the 11 a.m. press conference scheduled.

### **Azteca TV and Darchinyan**

A shower woke me up and two cups of coffee kept me awake and off to Los Angeles I drove along with my wife Jeannie to catch the morning press conference.

Top Rank planned two press conferences at the Wilshire Grand Hotel in downtown L.A. The first was to detail the new deal with Azteca TV that plans to show 26 to 29 boxing cards in 2009. The new host will be Adrian Garcia-Marquez, a very good young announcer I met at the Dodger games last year. He reported for one of the TV news teams on a daily basis and was excellent. He will be teamed with former junior middleweight champion Raul Marquez.

The press conferences filled to capacity with every high-powered boxing writer from Boston to Mexico City. The big guns were in the house including Franklin McNeil, George Willis, Kevin Iole, Dan Rafael, Lance Pugmire, Doug Fischer, Robert Morales, and I'm not even including many of the TV guys like Rich Marotta and Bernardo Osuna.

Funny how when one window closes others open. The loss of Telefutura's weekly show has led to ESPN Deportes expanding its boxing coverage, Versus adding more shows and now Azteca TV jumping into the boxing scene. I can't wait till the middle of the year when all of those boxing shows will be in full swing.

Around the room a number of boxers like Alfredo "Perro" Angulo, Francisco Arce, and of course the guest of honor Vic Darchinyan sat inside the too small room that was at capacity. Absent was Jorge Arce who promoter Bob Arum said wanted to remain in the mountains in full training.

Arce's brother "Panchito" attempted to hand Darchinyan a basket of eggs. The IBF champion was not taking any gifts. Armenia is pretty close to ancient Troy and they've seen that trick before. Never accept gifts or Trojan Horses.

When it was Darchinyan's turn the tiny pocket-sized destroyer said what he always says, "I am going to destroy him."

The good thing about Darchinyan is he always tries and usually does destroy everything in his path like a Tasmanian Devil.

After the two press conferences some of us headed back to our cars to gather our equipment before heading on foot to the Staples Center about three city blocks down the road.

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Pt. 2 coming tomorrow.