

Mayweather Will Have More Than Marquez On His Mind

Written by Frank Lotierzo

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The upcoming Mayweather-Marquez catch-weight fight is getting a little more interesting. And all due credit for that has to be given to Floyd Mayweather. Forget about how great you think he is or isn't as a fighter, Mayweather must be given his props for the way he's navigated his career since turning pro in October of 1996.

Mayweather gets to call the shots more so than anyone in boxing right now with the exception of Manny Pacquiao. I like Mayweather a lot as a fighter and think more highly of him than some may think. However, he's not a fighter I'll remember after he retires. When I think of an all-time great fighter/boxer, the name Floyd Mayweather isn't remotely close to the top of the list of fighters who I recall or think of.

However, when I think of fighters who were brilliantly managed he's at the top of the list. Even more so than Mike Tyson. In fairness to Floyd, Mike was a heavyweight and had dynamite in both hands along with combining speed and accuracy. Tyson was the best promoted fighter in boxing history, but he was also managed by two guys, Jim Jacobs and Bill Cayton, who were terrific at manipulating the boxing media. And they were aided by the fact that even the most novice boxing observer only had to watch Tyson fight once to see he was not just another heavyweight who could punch, something that made promoting and selling him much easier than Mayweather.

Mayweather is a fighter that you have to see fight a few times to appreciate some of the little subtle things he does in the ring that are calculated and thought out. More than that, he's basically managed himself and learned exceedingly fast just how the business of boxing works outside the ring. This led to him taking a more active role than most other upper-tier fighters have in how their career progressed and moved along. It may have not always made for the best fights from a spectator vantage point, but it's served him well and the risk/reward factor just about always worked to his advantage.

Some fighters are born with the "it" factor when it comes to charisma and fan appeal. Muhammad Ali was an irresistible presence and a huge draw whether he was a bad guy in the sixties or a good guy during the seventies. Sugar Ray Leonard and Oscar De La Hoya were perceived as good guys and both loved playing that up. Floyd doesn't have natural charisma. He comes off badly and is hard to tolerate when assuming the role as the bad guy, and he's dull and boring when playing the good guy role. That's why he's really gone out of his way to pump up the PPV sales for his upcoming fight with Juan Manuel Marquez. Mayweather got where he is on the backs of bigger ticket sellers, and now he's fooled people into believing that he's a ticket seller.

Only this time it's all on him because he has purposely gone out of his way to make it about him. In Mayweather's three highest profile bouts against Arturo Gatti, Oscar De La Hoya and Ricky Hatton, his opponent had the bigger following and was considered the bigger draw. Both Gatti and De La Hoya earned a bigger purse than Mayweather when they fought, and in De La

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Hoya's case it was slightly more than twice as much as Mayweather.

In his upcoming fight with Marquez, Mayweather is clearly the star and draw. That said, Marquez is/was a great fighter with a huge Hispanic following. And as Floyd himself has said repeatedly, "(B)lacks and Hispanics" dominate boxing. If fighting Marquez weren't enough to keep Mayweather occupied, a few weeks ago he noted that UFC 103 would run the same night he fights Marquez, and he promised that the sweet science would get the better of MMA on that evening.

Mayweather has gone out of his way in taking shots at MMA and acting as if it's irrelevant, even though it's not. The fact of the matter is Mayweather for the first time in his career has to carry the promotion and must do it on a night that runs in direct competition with another combat sport. Most believe that Mayweather will beat Marquez, but odds are it won't be a terrific fight, simply because of Floyd's size advantage coupled with his mindset and style. The intrigue of Mayweather fighting Marquez isn't whether or not he'll win, it's more the case of gauging how much he has left and how he matches up with Manny Pacquiao for a Super-Fight hopefully sometime next year.

Ever since he's announced his comeback, Mayweather has proclaimed he's the top draw in boxing. Obviously, he's concerned about living up to that and if for some reason UFC 103 has a better buy rate than his fight with Marquez, he'll never be able to live it down. That's the reason for his appearance on the WWE's "Monday Night RAW." Along with that the Mayweather-Marquez fight will be available at a discounted price in some movie theaters across the country, something that hasn't happened since the second fight between Roberto Duran and Sugar Ray Leonard back in November of 1980. That was a time when that was the only way to see a big fight live without attending it in person.

You better believe Mayweather will have more than just Juan Manuel Marquez on his mind the night of September 19th 2009. He not only has to beat Marquez somewhat convincingly in the ring, he also has to beat UFC 103 at the gate. One fight will tell us where he's at as a fighter, the other will inform us just how big of a PPV star Floyd Mayweather really is. If he's able to pull this one off, in spite of all of the obvious marketing distractions with the fight, he really has shown incredible savvy.

And because of that, Mayweather-Marquez is a little more interesting.

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