

Marquez Will Have No Choice But To Go After Mayweather

Written by Frank Lotierzo

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With Mayweather-Marquez two weeks away the coverage and spotlight has been exclusively centered on Floyd Mayweather Jr. There are plenty of reasons for that, starting with that he hasn't fought in 21 months and boxing fans are curious to if he's close to the same fighter he was before he orchestrated his phony retirement. When Mayweather left boxing after stopping Ricky Hatton in the 10th round of their WBC welterweight title bout in December of 2007, he was considered the mythical pound-for-pound best fighter in the sport, a title that now belongs to junior welterweight champ Manny Pacquiao. Juan Manuel Marquez, who's 0-1-1 versus Pacquiao, is thought to be number two on that list.

Marquez is a great fighter in his own right and is actually a more complete fighter than both Pacquiao and Mayweather. The reason for that is Marquez is so versatile and is just as comfortable fighting as the counter-puncher or changing up and initiating the action. Whereas Floyd brings everybody to him and controls the fight, and Pacquiao relies on his speed and power and basically looks to take his opponent out every time he cuts loose. However, because he's officially winless versus Pacquiao and isn't undefeated like Mayweather, Marquez is dwarfed by both of them.

Unfortunately for Marquez his performance from the second round on versus Pacquiao in their first fight has been forgotten. After being dropped by Pacquiao three times in the last minute and a half of the first round, Marquez made some of the best adjustments during a fight that I've ever seen by any fighter. He never panicked and thought his way through and managed to make it out of the round without the fight being stopped.

In the first round Marquez was coming in wide with his feet spread with hardly any head or upper body movement. He adjusted and from the second round on he stepped away from Pacquiao and forced Manny to reach for him. Marquez countered and timed Pacquiao after some of Manny's over-anxious attacks. From about the fourth or fifth round on, Marquez often caught Pacquiao with a counter right over Manny's low left hand before he could recoil it back. As the fight progressed Marquez started scoring with right leads before Pacquiao got off, which served him well in that it disrupted Pacquiao's aggression and kept him from walking Marquez down.

As terrific of a fighter as Marquez is, Mayweather is an extremely tough matchup for him stylistically. Floyd's physical size and length are going to make it hard for Marquez to out-box him from the outside. It won't take long for Juan to realize that Mayweather's reach, quick hands and straight punching will have to be disrupted in order for him to win the fight. In order for Marquez to disrupt Mayweather's rhythm and timing he's going to have to be able to do two things.

The first thing he'll need to do is get inside without getting peppered by Mayweather's punches on the way in. As mentioned above, Mayweather has controlled every opponent he's fought with the exception of Jose Luis Castillo in their first fight, by bringing them to him. Marquez is going

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to have to make Floyd miss and close the distance at the same time. Once inside Marquez will have to hope he carries enough punch to where he can take a little out of Mayweather so Floyd has to fight with a sense of urgency. This is something only Castillo was able to accomplish in the first meeting between them before being out-boxed and picked apart by Mayweather in the rematch.

Like Castillo, Marquez will try to go to the body. The problem he'll have is he's not as big or strong as Castillo physically, and won't be able to out muscle Floyd on the inside nor move him around to where he wants him. The other problem he'll incur is by going to Mayweather's body, Marquez will be open for Floyd's uppercuts up the middle.

Up to this point of his career Mayweather has shown himself to be durable and that he can take it to the body. Marquez is nothing close to being a life-taker when it comes to punching power, so even if he can get to it, it's questionable whether or not he can even bother Mayweather, let alone hurt him or force him to fight out of his comfort zone.

Styles make fights and the style advantage clearly is in favor of Mayweather. Marquez has a boxing scholar's intuition, but that won't be enough for him to beat Mayweather. Marquez has the ability to jab and counter, but he's not going to out jab Floyd. He'll have no choice but to fight as the aggressor and that's exactly what Mayweather wants him to do. For Marquez to have any chance at getting through to Mayweather he'll have to do it via hooks and finishing punches, which Mayweather's fundamentals and basics have always prevented him from being overwhelmed by.

Marquez just isn't big or strong enough to break Mayweather down in any shape or form. Add to that there's a chance his face will either get lumped up or cut as he's trying to get inside, I just can't see him getting it done. And most importantly when Mayweather and Marquez get in front of each other, it'll be Mayweather who will fight from his strength by stepping away and countering, thus forcing Marquez to hunt him down and leaving himself more open and exposed.

In order to beat Mayweather at 147, it'll take a fighter who can physically impose himself on him and move him around and rough him up. No welterweight or lightweight moving up can beat Mayweather at tag or by trying to out think or box him.

Frank Lotierzo can be contacted at GlovedFist@Gmail.com