Finally, after much ballyhoo and one postponement Floyd Mayweather Jr. 39-0 (25) and Juan Manuel Marquez 50-4-1 (37) will meet tonight in a 144 pound catch-weight/welterweight elimination bout. The winner will most likely fight the winner of the Pacquiao-Cotto 145 pound catch-weight bout scheduled for November 14th of this year.

With thousands of columns having already been written about Mayweather-Marquez, here's a final thought and prediction.

Juan Manuel Marquez is a great fighter and technician. He's one of the most versatile fighters of his era and has shown he can win fighting as the aggressor or the boxer/counter-puncher. Marquez has also exhibited the ability to adjust and change his style in the midst of a fight. And that's something that truly defines greatness in a fighter. On top of that he exudes confidence and is a fearless warrior inside the ring.

His trainer Nacho Beristain has devised a wonderful fight plan on how to beat Mayweather, and he's taught Marquez exactly what to do. He has Marquez digging combinations to the body, but then has him throw an absolutely wicked right uppercut with his fourth or fifth punch (after either throwing a hard hook to the ribs or feinting a big hook and then stepping in with the uppercut.) It's an amazing sequence. And Marquez really bangs with it. The problem is that he's too small and lacks the speed to bring it home nor does he have the strength or power (as only a real 130-135 pounder) to hurt Mayweather.

It's a shame that he won't be remembered for the great fighter he is (he'll be thought of the guy who lost to Pacquiao--and really, they're equals--and now Mayweather--a guy who is just way too big for him.) Plus many fans seem to forget that the guy is 36 years old already.

Floyd Mayweather is also a great fighter. But in all honesty I can't shower him with praise as others do because I'm not as overwhelmed by his skills and body of work. Everybody knows all that Floyd brings to the ring as a fighter. Speed, brains, counter-punching and defense all applied at an extremely high level. That said I believe Floyd is a little overrated. His identity is being undefeated and that has provided him plenty of capital in stating his case for greatness. If he were 38-1 instead of 39-0 I doubt so many would marvel at his skill-set quite the way they do. And if his name was Merriweather instead of Mayweather, he'd be 38-1 because he lost 7-5 / 115-113 to Jose Luis Castillo the first time they fought.

For anyone who believes that's a biased opinion, get over it. I could care less about what Mayweather says about HBO, Larry Merchant, Oscar De La Hoya or a boxing public/media who he views as racist. I'm adult enough to check my personal feelings and write about him as a fighter and separate everything else. I believe O.J. Simpson committed double murder despite the not guilty verdict in his criminal trial. That said he's one of the top three running backs I've ever seen in my life and would vehemently oppose anyone suggesting he doesn't belong in the NFL Hall-Of-Fame.

It's no secret that Floyd Mayweather Jr. hasn't faced great opposition nor has he been willing to fight the best opposition available. In practically every one of his marquee fights, like it is with Marquez tonight, there's been an angle that favors him. Floyd has picked the right fights throughout his career and in the end he'll come out on top in both the ring and the game of boxing for it.

Since the announcement of this fight Mayweather has said repeatedly that Marquez called him out and that's why the fight was made. Amazingly Floyd forgets how many of the top welterweights called him out before his contrived retirement. There isn't/wasn't one top welterweight who ducked or avoided a fight with Floyd Mayweather Jr. He was the biggest name in the division and most objective fight fans know that just for the money alone they wouldn't hesitate to fight him.

Again Floyd's boxing business acumen has served him well. Think about it. By the time Mayweather fights Pacquiao, Miguel Cotto will be even more on the decline and have possibly two losses on his record. Antonio Margarito will have a lot of ring rust and with him being stopped by Shane Mosley in his last fight, what would Mayweather gain by fighting him? Speaking of Mosley, Shane will be crowding 40 years old by the time a fight between him and Mayweather could be made. Sure, Floyd would take that fight, but it wouldn't enhance his legacy to me by winning a decision over Mosley in late 2010. And that's assuming Mosley doesn't lose before then which isn't a given. And lastly Paul Williams has moved up and is no longer considered a viable welterweight contender. Mayweather couldn't have timed his retirement better in as far as avoiding the top welterweights who would've provided him his biggest challenges.

Mayweather is clearly bigger than Marquez and bringing him up to 144, and then weighing 146 at the weigh in, is a decided advantage for him. It's flat out dishonest saying that it's not. Mayweather even said this week that "he (Marquez) is a good little man. I am a great, big one." Marquez will no doubt be slowed by the added weight and the slight increase he may gain in strength will be a non-factor in the fight. Marquez is the first genuinely great fighter that Floyd will have faced in his career. The problem is it's at least 14 pounds above his true weight and at the end of his career.

This is a fight that Mayweather should no doubt win evidenced by him being an almost 4-to-1 betting favorite. Beating Marquez is something that will enhance Mayweather's resume and being 40-0 looks great. But I'd be more impressed if he was 40-0 versus Cotto or Mosley type opposition as opposed to his career defining fight to date being against an inflated old featherweight great.

Prediction: Mayweather will win tonight. He has the size and the perfect style to neutralize Marquez. If he didn't have almost everything tilting in his favor I question whether or not the fight would be happening, despite Marquez calling him out. Mayweather will most likely win by decision, but if he's got a referee who's halfway on his side it's not a reach to envision him stopping Marquez.

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