

Klitschko Gained What Mayweather Clamors For

Written by Frank Lotierzo

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During the Klitschko-Arreola WBC heavyweight title bout this past weekend, HBO blow-by-blow commentator Jim Lampley opined that the fight was as one sided as Floyd Mayweather's bout versus Juan Manuel Marquez the week before. Personally, Klitschko's dismantling of Arreola reminded this observer more of the Lewis-Tua title bout nine years ago. That said, Lampley's Mayweather-Marquez observation isn't a reach.

The big difference between Klitschko-Arreola and Mayweather-Marquez is how the winners have been received after their respective one-sided victories. The winners were both dominant and could do whatever they wanted with their opponent, but for different reasons. And because of those reasons Mayweather came away from his showing getting tons of backlash. Klitschko is coming away from his performance and is getting more respect and no backlash.

Most boxing fans including the most ardent Mayweather fans realize and accept that Floyd hand picked Marquez and not only skipped over the top contenders in his respective division, but the entire division. He fought the lightweight champion. Going by that boxing history really missed out on not seeing lightweight champ Alexis Arguello fight welterweight champ Sugar Ray Leonard when both ruled their weight divisions in the early eighties. As if Leonard would've justified his greatness by beating Arguello.

Mayweather controlled every aspect of his bout with Marquez from opponent, weight, age, size, speed, power and physical strength to the point that the people who paid to see the fight felt duped for buying what was basically a set-up. Klitschko on the other hand didn't hand pick Arreola. He fought an undefeated number-one contender who weighed the same as he did and is ten years younger. And he fought him in his back yard in front of a hostile crowd. Sure, Klitschko had much more experience, but Arreola being a heavyweight who can punch was a bigger threat to Klitschko than Marquez ever was to Mayweather. Some of that is due to Mayweather being such a fantastic technician and marksman, but a lot of it was Marquez being just too small. He would've lost to any one of the other top welterweights in the division just as one-sidedly.

In other words Klitschko had no manufactured advantages other than his experience and skill set, and that's in play every time two fighters get in the ring. Klitschko won because of those two reasons and nothing else. He fought a great fight tactically by moving and jabbing along with tying up Arreola and disrupting any chance he had to exchange with him.

In the aftermath of his fight with Cris Arreola, Vitali Klitschko has gained respect and admiration from anyone who saw the fight. He's also elevated his stature in the boxing community. One thing is for sure, Vitali has continually fought the best available opposition and the same applies to his brother Wladimir. And that's all that can be asked of any fighter. No, Vitali Klitschko isn't undefeated like Mayweather is, but there are less questions hovering over him than there are Mayweather. We've seen Klitschko in with an all-time great like Lennox Lewis and he's proved that he deserves to be included amongst the best heavyweights that have come along in the

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last 30 years.

Mayweather's claim to greatness is being undefeated, but that doesn't tell the whole story to anyone who knows how to read and interpret a fighters won-loss record. The level of opposition a fighter faces in the ring is the ultimate truth detector as to the level of resistance he's been opposed by. Most upper-tier fighters will excel when they are confronted by lesser resistance like Mayweather has.

Floyd Mayweather has without question fought some outstanding fighters during his career, but there's also been a definitive angle favoring him in his so called signature fights, and that's inescapable. No one doubts the skill set of Floyd and all he can do inside a boxing ring. The only question about him is can he excel against fighters who are truly recognized as being close to his equal that aren't older, smaller or coming off periods of inactivity?

Based on the fallout from their last fights, Klitschko has earned more respect than Mayweather from boxing purist, something Mayweather so desperately wants and clamors for. Vitali has slowly gone about getting it as opposed to demanding it and trying to con the fans into giving it up to him. No objective boxing purist has a built in negative agenda for any particular fighter, including Floyd Mayweather. Even if a fighter isn't liked personally, most fans/writers are intellectually honest enough to give him his due if he constantly fights the best and earns it on fight night instead of the negotiating table.

Had Floyd Mayweather attempted to clean out the welterweight division after compiling a fortune in 2007 fighting Oscar De La Hoya and Ricky Hatton, the old 'he hasn't truly proved himself' debate would've been squashed by now. It's just that Mayweather continues to profess his greatness but hasn't gone out of his way to shut up the doubters who present a very substantive argument opposing his stature and how he measures up against the past greatest of the greats. Everybody knows who the all-time greats are/were and they never have to tell you, everyone says it for them. Never has there been a supposed all-time great fighter who's had to campaign and lobby for it like Mayweather does every time he's interviewed.

Even the most avid Mayweather detractors could exist in a boxing world saying, "the guy's a jerk, but man was he some fighter. That's something nobody can deny." However, that's not the case. Not to mention the opponents to prove himself against along with time are running out. And beating Pacquiao (which he will) won't be enough to silence most of his critics. No, he'll have to do more than beat a former flyweight champ who he'll fight at welterweight to do that with impunity.

Mayweather needs to take a page out of Klitschko's playbook if he wants the respect he demands. In reality if Floyd fought an old Mosley and lost a close decision his doubters would elevate him more off of that than they will after beating Marquez and Pacquiao to end his career.

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