

Floyd Mayweather Finally Loses

Written by Frank Lotierzo

Saturday, 31 October 2009 19:00

40-0. A perfect track record of big-buy pay per views. Flawless manipulation of the public, the media, and damn near everyone else he's ever encountered.

And then Floyd Mayweather managed to get taken down by a New York emcee named R.A. the Rugged Man, who outthought, outmaneuvered, and outslugged Money from the opening bell until it was all over. If I'd been Floyd's cornerman, I'd have pulled the plug after the first few rounds. There's no way he should have taken that kind of beating.

Mayweather was a surprise phone-in guest of the R.A, the Rugged Man's Sirius Eminem's Shade 45 Show. After a moment of feeling each other out, exchanging pleasantries, the normally cautious Mayweather walked right into a sucker punch that nailed him squarely on the chin, a mistake he's seldom made in the ring as a fighter.

"So Floyd, when you gonna fight somebody your own size in the top two?"

Maybe like a lot of fighters who get caught cold, Mayweather never recovered from the punch he didn't see. Not to mention R.A. was Floyd's equal when it came to speed and thinking on your feet.

As it turned out, R.A. came armed with information - lots of it. This wasn't some boxing-ignorant radio personality trying to drum up a little controversy. His criticism was pointed and entirely valid. Everything he threw at Mayweather is what many fight aficionados have thought about saying to him had they been presented the opportunity to. Mayweather's response revealed a lot about how he thinks, how surprisingly easy it is to unsettle him, and the lengths he'll go to in order to justify why he's been avoiding certain fighters.

Here's how he answered the question above.

"It's not up to me. Boxing don't work like that." This comes from a guy who is always quick to point out that nobody tells him what to do, that he fights who, when, and where he wants, and that he's not stuck in service to any promoter.

After explaining how Bob Arum doesn't want either Miguel Angel Cotto or Manny Pacquiao to fight him, Floyd begins bragging about his decision win over Carlos Baldomir. Could anyone envision Shane Mosley or Miguel Cotto trying to suggest how they're greater than Sugar Ray Robinson by highlighting they beat Carlos Baldomir?

"Oh man, Baldomir with eleven losses? How about this: why didn't you fight Margarito when you were offered eight million dollars?"

And the guy who compared himself favorably to Sugar Ray Robinson begins hemming and hawing, arguing with a man he doesn't know in an attempt to justify himself. He begins lying.

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“Why would I fight Margarito for eight million when I could get twelve million fighting for the title?”

“Who’d you get twelve million for fighting? I don’t believe you.”

R.A. the Rugged Man is right about that. It wasn’t that he was simply trying to trash Mayweather. As a boxing fan, he was willing—even eager—to concede that Floyd was a great fighter. That was his point: he felt that Mayweather was squandering his legacy.

Floyd tries to suggest that neither Cotto nor Pacquiao is calling him out, but the Rugged Man cuts him off by saying that everybody wants to fight him. He mentions Shane Mosley, then adds that Paul Williams would “smack your ass.”

Floyd’s response is that people are “praying for his downfall.”

No dice. The Rugged Man points out that he was a big fan of Floyd’s. He cites the Diego Corrales fight as an example of what Mayweather could be at his best.

Things go downhill. Mayweather boasts about the miracle of coming back from a two year layoff. It’s pointed out that the layoff wasn’t two years and was against a 36 year old featherweight. Floyd screams, “I’m in my 30s!”

He talks about Mosley’s past steroid use as a reason for not fighting him. At every turn, he shows weakness.

I’d always assumed that Floyd Mayweather talked the way he did because he’s a businessman first and foremost. And I thought that, at some level, he really believed he was the great fighter he presented himself to be. Coming from a fighting family and having lived his entire life in a boxing ring, I figured that he was completely secure about fighting anyone, and that it didn’t bother him when detractors challenged him on his legacy.

I was wrong. Floyd Mayweather knows he’s ducking Mosley, Williams, Margarito, and Cotto. It’s not about money. He wants money, but he’s heard the whispers and he’s worried that, once defeated, he will have irreparably tarnished his reputation. He’s made his name on being undefeated, and he’ll do anything necessary to stay undefeated, even if it includes embarrassing himself.

Floyd Mayweather has shown very few exploitable weaknesses in the ring. He’s fought a lot of good fighters, and he’s remained unbeaten. But he got knocked out by a radio deejay. And, in allowing himself to enter into a desperate argument in public, he showed a character chink in his armor that any future opponent may be able to take advantage of.

No other all-time great had to beg for accolades like Mayweather has. Can you imagine Roberto Duran, Sugar Ray Leonard, Thomas Hearns, Marvin Hagler, or Bernard Hopkins arguing with a radio deejay about their legacy and all-time great status?

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