

Will The Absence Of A Bad Guy Hurt Pacquiao-Cotto PPV Buys?

Written by Frank Lotierzo

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Then Mayweather decided to give the fight a needed injection, donning the black hat and assuming the role of the bad guy during the final episodes of HBO's 24/7 and the rest of his interactions in front of the camera and media. Floyd being the astute businessman and manipulator saw that aside from him coming back after a contrived retirement - there really wasn't anything about the fight that made it "must see." The only thing that sparked debate regarding the fight didn't happen until Marquez drank his own urine, and that was short lived.

Mayweather as stated here before is unlikable as a bad guy and is boring and not too interesting as a good guy. In politics everyone says they can't stand negative campaign adds, but every candidate uses them. Why? Because they work. If Floyd knows one thing it's how to adopt the villain role and the buy numbers for his fight with Marquez endorsed that it's his only look. And it can't be overlooked that Mayweather has spent some time around WWE president Vince McMahon during the last few years - and who's made more money and done a better job promoting and selling the good-guy versus the bad-guy scenario than McMahon has? Nobody. It was obvious watching Mayweather during the weeks before the Marquez that he took great notes while being in McMahon's company.

When Mayweather realized the hype for the fight was becoming a little stale he went to work. Floyd's antics began with him ripping writers and fans for not paying the proper homage to him for being the great fighter he believes he is. Then Mayweather started mentioning that he's the greatest fighter in boxing history and how his career accomplishments and ring skills eclipse those of all-time greats such as Sugar Ray Robinson and Muhammad Ali. Simply put Floyd did whatever it took to make fans notice him and he could not have cared less whether or not the coverage about him was negative or positive. Actually Floyd seemed to feed off of the negative publicity he got and went out of his way to be confrontational. As long as he incited people to buy the fight with Marquez, nothing was out of bounds as long as at the end of the day he could count his money on the way to the bank. And he did.

Anyone who knows anything worth knowing about professional boxing knows and gets it that Pacquiao-Cotto is a much better fight than Mayweather-Marquez on paper and the odds are overwhelming that it'll unfold as such in the ring regardless of who wins. But that's not enough in today's society. Whether it's boxing, NFL football or any other sport, sizzle will always sell better than substance. Without pageantry and drama, it's hard to keep fans interested unless they have a vested rooting interest.

As of this writing it's starting to feel that something is missing in regards to the promotion of Pacquiao-Cotto. And that something is probably the fact that other than both Manny and Miguel being great fighters who are willing to fight the best of the best, they're both pretty much nice guys and easy to root for. In truth there's no reason to root against Pacquiao unless you're a big Cotto fan, and vice-versa. During the first episode of HBO's 24/7 we found out that both fighters respect each other and are training hard for the fight, which is not news to anyone. If it wasn't for Pacquiao's trainer Freddie Roach's openness we wouldn't learn too much from the Pacquiao

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faction. On the other hand Cotto comes off as if he couldn't be bothered with trying to help promote the fight and is totally focused on training and not talking, a personality trait Pacquiao and Cotto share.

One of the things that makes Pacquiao vs. Cotto such an intriguing fight is the fact that both fighters have shown to all that they're true warriors in the ring and never make excuses for a bad showing or defeat. Both fighters have been tested and have dealt with adversity in superior fashion. Neither goes out of his way to insult their opponents or fans and are only concerned with doing what they're paid to do, and that's fight. The drawback to them being regular guys that can fight their butt off is there's no reason to watch them other than to see a good fight. Never will they denigrate their opponent or say anything inflammatory.

That said, sometimes it takes more than just being a great fighter to spark interest among fringe fans who don't follow boxing and live and die with the result of one particular fighter. The Mayweather-Marquez fight did one million pay-per-view buys less than two months ago despite the knowledge before hand it wasn't going to be a competitive bout. And that was due to Floyd Mayweather going out of his way in doing whatever he could to play the role of the bad guy, hoping the result would be that fans built up such a passionate dislike for him they'd buy the fight just in case he lost.

I'm sure the Pacquiao-Cotto bout will do well based strictly on its substance. However, it would do even better if it had a little more sizzle to wake up the promotion. The problem is neither Pacquiao or Cotto seem as though they have the personal make-up to adopt the role as the villain and put on the black hat. Mayweather came of age during the promotion of his fight with Marquez and showed just by ticking people off and thinking out of the box, a fight where it was impossible to imagine one guy winning actually went over big and had an outstanding buy rate.

Manny Pacquiao and Miguel Cotto have shown they're Mayweather's equal in the ring, but Floyd is their father when it comes to selling a fight, even a presumed mismatch.

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