

Pacquiao Admits Catch-Weight Is Crucial To Outcome With Cotto

Written by Frank Lotierzo

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This past Sunday on GMANews.TV, Manny Pacquiao said he knows exactly what Miguel Cotto is going through trying to get down to weight the week before the fight. Pacquiao went as far as to say that having been in a similar situation himself, the weight reduction is going to play a crucial role in the outcome of the fight.

Manny stated that along with trying to sweat off the weight, Cotto will be reducing his caloric intake to make the 145 catch-weight limit stipulated in the fight contract. And he knows that effort will be very demanding on Miguel.

Outside of having your relatives referee and score your fight, there's no more sure way to compromise a fighter and help alter the outcome of it than beating him on the scale. Bringing a fighter down in weight if it's a struggle affects everything he does in the ring in a bad way.

Pacquiao's failure to make weight resulted in him losing his WBC flyweight title to Medgoen Singsurat when he was knocked out in the third round 10 years ago. He also had a difficult time making the 130-pound limit for his rematch with Juan Manuel Marquez in March of 2008, a fight in which some observers believe the split decision verdict in his favor could have just as easily gone to Marquez.

A little over a week out from the fight Pacquiao says he weighs between 148 and 149. So much for him being the smaller fighter next to Cotto.

The catch-weight of 145 for Pacquiao-Cotto has been a topic of fierce debate since the bout was signed. One side of the argument is that Cotto is too big and should meet Pacquiao somewhere below the welterweight limit of 147 to make it more fair. The opposing side asks why Cotto has to put his WBO welterweight title on the line and not be allowed to weigh the maximum the division allows.

To those who believe Cotto isn't at a slight disadvantage coming in at 145 Manny Pacquiao says you're wrong. And if making 145 isn't a big deal for Cotto why has he never fought below 146 since moving up to welterweight?

A sure sign of a fighter who struggles getting down to weight is the one who usually weighs in right at the division limit or a half to a full pound below it. Jake LaMotta barely made middleweight before and during his reign as middleweight champ. I trained with former light heavyweight champ Dwight Muhammad Qawi - and making 175 was always a struggle for him, evidenced by him always coming in right at the light heavyweight limit or a half a pound under it once he won and defended the title.

Then there's the other side where fighters like Marvin Hagler often made the middleweight limit by 2/3 pounds. And the same applied to Michael Spinks making the light heavyweight limit of 175. Both Hagler and Spinks breezed to make weight and always came in under the division

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limit.

Miguel Cotto has been weighing in between 146 and 147 since he outgrew the junior welterweight division. That's a testament indicating making the 147 pound limit isn't easy for him and it requires a lot just for him to do that.

Making 145 isn't the issue concerning Cotto; there's no doubt he'll be able to do that. And it wouldn't be a shock, at least not here, if he in fact came in at 144 being that's he's probably been consumed with how much he weighs during his preparation for the fight. The question is will he be his best and the same fighter who fought Mosley, Margarito and Clotney? And no one knows the answer to that.

One thing we do know is Cotto won't be better at 145 or 144.5 for Pacquiao than he was at 146 for the three previous mentioned fights. These two fighters are almost the same size and it wouldn't be the least bit surprising if when they get into the ring Saturday night that Pacquiao looks like the bigger fighter.

Anyone who has ever been around a fighter who's trying to cut weight knows it's not a pretty sight. There's only so much spit, waste and sweat in their body. And there's a good chance that that will compromise Cotto. Which doesn't mean Pacquiao wouldn't have won the fight even if Cotto came in at 146/147, if he does.

However, those two pounds that Cotto has to lose will affect him more than the 147 he could've carried would've harmed Pacquiao. If losing unnatural weight hurt Pacquiao against Singurat and Marquez, then it's a fair point Cotto may be hurt trying to cut the extra pound to fight him.

Of course it'll be argued that Pacquiao had to cut weight because he was still growing, and that's a legit point. But on the other hand, Cotto has already flowered and is very vulnerable to being a little depleted at 145 at this stage of his career.

Does the catch-weight clause of 145 mean Pacquiao shouldn't receive all due props if he wins? No. Pacquiao supporters will argue it made no difference and he's just the greater fighter. Whereas Cotto's fans will be emphatic that the catch-weight was the main reason Miguel lost if he does. Either way it'll be overstated.

But it's an undeniable truth that Pacquiao will not be confronting the same fighter in Cotto that fought Mosley and Margarito.

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