

Compared To De La Hoya, Pacquiao And Mayweather Aren't Superstars

Written by Frank Lotierzo

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The PPV numbers for the Pacquiao-Cotto fight are in and they're just as inconclusive as they are conclusive. Pacquiao-Cotto generated \$70 million with 1.25 million buys, topping September's

Mayweather-Marquez bout which brought in \$52 million on 1.05 million buys. Pacquiao-Cotto is tied for third (De La Hoya-Pacquiao) amongst the largest grossing non-heavyweight fights in boxing history;

Mayweather-Marquez is sixth.

So who's today's top draw, Manny Pacquiao or Floyd Mayweather? The answer is: before the fight it was a toss-up. Pacquiao-Cotto did slightly better numbers - but Manny faced an opponent who was coming down in weight who was thought to have a more legitimate shot to beat him. Whereas Mayweather forced Marquez to come up nine pounds and was perceived by virtually all boxing insiders to have no shot to beat him.

Mayweather was also coming back after not fighting in roughly 20 months and there was an added curiosity to see if he had declined since his last fight. And Mayweather-Marquez was aided by the public perception as being a good-guy versus a bad-guy bout and Mayweather did a terrific job selling the fight in the final week before the fight. As opposed to the Pacquiao-Cotto promotion which was flat and featured good-guy versus good-guy, which was mentioned here as a potential pitfall prior to the fight.

It's fair to say that Pacquiao-Cotto didn't quite live up to it's expectations as far as PPV buys and Mayweather-Marquez exceeded expectations. But based on the action and excitement of their last fight, Pacquiao is a bigger draw and creates more excitement than Mayweather at this time. And I say that because if Mayweather and Pacquiao fought one of the top five welterweight contenders on the same night, Pacquiao's fight would do bigger numbers. That aside there's no other fighter close to either of them when it comes to capturing the interest of boxing fans or asking them to reach into their wallet and pay to watch them work.

Speaking of asking fans to shell out money to buy their fights, Pacquiao and Mayweather are minor league players compared to Oscar De La Hoya on the world stage and being a true superstar. He wasn't called the "Golden Boy" just because he's a former Olympic gold medalist, and in reality it took

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De La Hoya to fight both Floyd and Manny to put them on the radar and translate both into the quasi-stars they currently are.

When you compare the PPV numbers of Pacquiao and Mayweather next to De La Hoya's, it's no contest. Oscar's fight with Felix Trinidad more than a decade ago grossed \$71.4 million on 1.4 million buys. Which is \$19.4 million more and four hundred thousand more buys than Mayweather-Marquez, and \$1.4 million and one hundred and seventy five thousand more buys than what Pacquiao-Cotto did. And in September of 1999, Oscar didn't have the benefit of fighting a superstar like himself to help draw attention to his fights like the spotlight he provided Pacquiao and Mayweather when he fought them. It also cannot be overlooked that he came up when the media world and sports/boxing coverage was in its infancy and hadn't exploded into the monster it is today.

Pacquiao and Mayweather had the benefit of four prime-time specials on HBO's 24/7, something that would've propelled De La Hoya-Trinidad into being an even bigger fight. In 1999 the boxing world was hungering for the type of personal access to Oscar De La Hoya that HBO 24/7 sheds on fighters participating in today's super-fights. By the time it evolved in 2007 for De La Hoya-Mayweather, the boxing public knew everything they wanted or needed to know about Oscar along with fully understanding that he was only a part-time fighter after being stopped by Bernard Hopkins in 2004.

Another obstacle De La Hoya had in 1999 was the fact that he was competing for the spotlight with Roy Jones who was in his prime, and three hall-of-fame heavyweights named Lennox Lewis, Evander Holyfield and Mike Tyson. As of this writing Paul Williams is the only fighter that really intrigues and stimulates boxing fans excluding Pacquiao and Mayweather. And it doesn't hurt them that there isn't one heavyweight in the world that boxing fans would go out of their way to see fight.

Oscar De La Hoya had tremendous crossover appeal. His fights drew hardcore boxing fans, whites, blacks, Hispanics along with women and young girls. And it was his ability to bring in non boxing fans which probably made up one-third of the buys his bouts produced, which sets him apart from Pacquiao and Mayweather.

When looking at the numbers De La Hoya's bouts produced, it's nothing short of remarkable. And I say that because Oscar really wasn't a great fighter nor were his fights very exciting. Whereas Pacquiao always provides excitement when he fights and Mayweather is a superior boxer and technician.

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In reality Oscar did the most with the least and may wind up as one of boxings' greatest visionaries.

Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather are the most talked about and comprehensively covered fighters in boxing today. A fight between them in 2010 could possibly produce the biggest grossing in boxing history.

But that won't change the fact that neither one of them are close to being the world superstar and personality that Oscar De La Hoya was during his era and peak.

The top non-heavyweight pay-per-view events in boxing history:

1. Floyd Mayweather-Oscar De La Hoya, 2007, 2.44 million, \$136.6 million:
2. Felix Trinidad-Oscar De La Hoya, 1999, 1.4 million, \$71.4 million:
3. Manny Pacquiao-Miguel Cotto, 2009 1.25 million, \$70 million:
3. Manny Pacquiao-Oscar De La Hoya, 2008, 1.25 million, \$70 million:
5. Bernard Hopkins-Oscar De La Hoya, 2004, 1 million, \$56 million:
6. Floyd Mayweather-Juan Manuel Marquez, 2009, 1 million, \$52 million:

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