

Borges Take On Pacman/Mayweather Debacle

Written by Ron Borges

Monday, 28 December 2009 18:00

First understand this – there is no high ground here in this argument over blood tests and performance enhancing drugs. Some ground is lower than others but there is no one standing for purity or righteousness or even for the good of boxing. This is an argument about one of two things or maybe both but nothing else – it is about power and gamesmanship.

The rest, all of it from both sides, is smoke and mirrors and boxing bullshit designed to confuse the public but if the people representing Floyd Mayweather, Jr. and Manny Pacquiao aren't careful what they are going to succeed in doing is what they've done so many times in the past – they'll turn the public off to the point that a great spectacle will become just another example of how the suits who have run the sport into the ground continue to throw a little more dirt on the coffin every chance they get.

On the surface the issue is about performance enhancing drugs and Floyd Mayweather, Jr.'s alleged insistence that both he and Manny Pacquiao agree to random blood tests right up to the day of the fight. Mayweather's father has insisted Pacquiao is a drug cheat but has offered not one scintilla of evidence to prove it except that he knocked his fighter, Ricky Hatton, cold in two rounds. That was not a blood test. That was a beating administered by one class of fighter to another several rungs below him.

Now it is Golden Boy Promotions, who represent Mayweather in these negotiations, that is insisting on random blood tests for PEDs. That they are the ones demanding this is laughable because little more than a year ago they were on the other side of the issue and saying nearly the same words Pacquiao's promoter, Bob Arum, is now using to refuse such testing when Zab Judah demanded it before fighting GBP's Shane Mosley.

The only difference is Mosley had already admitted using PEDS, albeit claiming unknowingly. He also was found to be a client of BALCO, the disgraced San Francisco company at the center of the steroid scandal that sent Marion Jones to prison and cast a dark shadow over the baseball accomplishments of Barry Bonds and others.

Yet despite all of that, Richard Schaefer, CEO of Golden Boy, told the Associated Press at the time that while Mosley would agree to any tests required by the Nevada State Athletic Commission "we are not going to do other tests than the Nevada Commission requires. The fact is Shane is not a cheater and he does not need to be treated like one."

The facts however argue otherwise. He was a cheater, although he claimed unwittingly so, and he did need to be treated like one but the fight never came off so it didn't matter until now, where Schaefer and Golden Boy find themselves arguing the exact opposite side while Arum is saying his fighter will adhere to any tests the NSAC wants but does not need to be treated like a cheater.

Arum is right because there is no evidence of Pacquiao using steroids, HGH or other

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performance enhancing drugs. He has grown from a 106 pound fighter to a world champion at as high as 147 pounds but he is not the first to move up in weight and win and won't be the last.

Schaefer keeps insisting Golden Boy is not accusing Pacquiao of anything when Mayweather's father already has and their continued insistence on putting the biggest fight in years in jeopardy over the issue implies they have concerns. In essence, they're telling the public the fight might not be on the up and up unless drug testing labs are involved. If that's true, why should they pay \$55 or more to watch it?

Meanwhile, Arum and Pacquiao argue he's willing to be tested when the first press conference is held in January and any time up to 30 days before the fight as well as immediately after it. That sounds reasonable enough unless you know anything about PEDs. If you do you would understand that that much time between the testing and the event would render the tests worthless.

Masking agents and the men and women who create them are already far ahead of the testing agencies. Jones, for example, is one of many dirty athletes who never tested positive. That's because if you know when the tests are coming and the people around you know what they're doing you'd have to be an idiot – or James Toney – to get caught.

Toney did get caught after defeating then heavyweight champion John Ruiz, thus vacating his victory and allowing Ruiz to retain the title. In his corner that night was Freddie Roach, Pacquiao's trainer. There is not one hint of evidence Roach knew a thing about it but it happened any way, the point being only the fighter and his druggist really know what's going on so the only way to be sure is random testing as close to the event as possible as well as immediately after it.

Pacquiao has claimed he doesn't want to have blood taken so close to the event yet HBO's 24/7 show prior to the Hatton fight clearly showed him having blood drawn two weeks before they fought. Apparently his aversion to blood tests so close to a fight is a recent phenomenon.

Arum keeps changing what he'll agree to, now saying the Pacquiao camp would agree to whatever the Commission says. That may sound noble but NSAC executive director Keith Kizer said during the Judah-Mosley flap that "Our inspectors aren't qualified or licensed to draw blood." Nevada Athletic Commission rules make no mention of blood testing, using only urine testing which is useless for discovering most forms of PED use because they are so rudimentary.

So he's agreed to that knowing the NSAC isn't going to order random blood testing in the final week or two before the fight. There is a question if they could even legally do so if they wanted to because it would require a change in the state regulations, which would need to be approved in advance and there isn't time enough for that.

If Pacquiao is clean and knows he's clean why not just agree and be done with it? Well, one could argue the same way Schaefer did for Mosley and much more effectively since unlike Mosley he has no priors and hence deserves the full presumption of innocence.

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Then again, if he knows he's clean, why not just say "Sure, let's make this the most tested sporting event in history. Let's be leaders in what has become professional sport's dirty little secret. Let's be cleaner than the Olympics, which wouldn't take much. Let's be cleaner than baseball and football, which wouldn't take much. Let's both be tested right up to the morning of the fight."

He could but instead he's said "I'm willing to be tested as long as they'll be done at a time when they'll be meaningless." It is reasonable to ask why but then again it's just as reasonable to ask why Golden Boy is demanding this testing of a guy never implicated in PED usage after having been so adamantly opposed to it when Mosley, an admitted cheat, was involved.

What it tells me is somebody for some reason doesn't want the fight. Is it Mayweather? Is it the people around him? Is it Pacquiao? Is it the people around him? No one knows but if it doesn't happen because of blood testing the public will turn up its nose, close its eyes and return to ignoring a sport that has earned their disinterest by just this kind of stupidity.

The NBA has a gambling scandal with an official and the same day he's busted Commissioner David Stern is screaming the guy is a rogue official. Every sport works to keep their reputation unsullied. Boxing works at heaping dirt upon itself and one of its greatest ambassador's – Manny Pacquiao. Why? They can't help themselves that's why.

Golden Boy issued a press release on Monday saying if the fight doesn't come off don't blame them. They also said "nobody from Team Mayweather or Golden Boy Promotions is accusing Paquiao of anything." That is simply a bald-faced lie. Every one of their actions accuses Pacquiao. It is, as they say in the ghetto, a classic case of throwing a rock and hiding your hand. The guy's father puts the accusation out there. His promoters then say they'll call off the biggest fight in boxing history if he Pacquiao won't agree to random blood testing, which is not required in Nevada, right up until days before the fight.

No, they're not accusing him of anything. That would take some courage...and a good lawyer. They just put it out there and let it, and him, hang.

But before you canonize Pacquiao and Arum, hold on a minute. They know the testing they have agreed to would be useless in catching anyone using PEDs efficiently to prepare for this fight. It would be less than a take home exam.

They also know if he'll be clean or not. If he is he could just throw it back in Mayweather's face and say, "All right Little Floyd, you want blood tests we'll take blood tests. We'll take a test two weeks before the fight, a week before the fight, at the weigh-in and then a last one a minute after you wake up from after I knock you stiff."

Now that would drive some interest.

In the end who knows how this will go. The money interests in all sides would seem to demand a settlement but Arum claims he's already making plans for an alternate March 20 fight for Pacquiao against Paulie Malignaggi. Now that's interesting because Malignaggi long ago

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accused Pacquiao of using performance enhancing drugs and Bob Arum isn't threatening him. Maybe that's because he knows he's no threat to Manny Pacquiao.

That's boxing. The theatre of the absurd and a sport that, even on the cusp of one of its brightest moments in years, couldn't help but sully itself once again.