

2009's Final Thought On The State Of Pacquiao vs. Mayweather

Written by Frank Lotierzo

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Does Floyd Mayweather Jr. believe inside that he'll beat Manny Pacquiao when and if they fight? Yes. But does he know it's a lock? No. And does he now know after seeing Miguel Cotto catch Pacquiao with his Sunday left-hook to the head and body that it's likely he'll have to go the distance and win a decision? You better believe it.

So what do you do when you are fighting a guy and mentally you acknowledge you're going to have life and death with him for 12-rounds? He happens to be a fighter who doesn't slow down and is going to be a dangerous threat to you all night. In addition to that you have no angles, and no advantages physically or mentally over your opponent? As a matter of fact for the first time in your career you might be on the short end of the decision if the fight is close because the other guy is the draw and the HBO guy.

When faced with that, you do just what Mayweather and his associates have done, and that's try to get to the opponent mentally by creating and manufacturing a controversy. The HGH/steroid issue regarding Pacquiao is nothing more than a smoke screen with the hope of Mayweather trying to gain a mental advantage. Only this time unlike when he fought Juan Manuel Marquez who had no leverage and couldn't stop Mayweather from getting over on him at the weigh in Pacquiao can tell Floyd to go take a hike and make other fights that will add to his bank account and legacy quite handsomely, options that Mayweather doesn't really have, at least not nearly to the degree in which Pacquiao does.

The problem Mayweather has in dealing with and trying to make a fight with Pacquiao is he doesn't own any meaningful leverage inside or outside of the ring over him. By virtue of the way he's conducted his career outside of the ring and ordered basically from boxing's a la carte menu, Floyd's not afforded any benefit of the doubt. That's not an anti-Floyd perspective. It's an honest perspective unless you write for a certain Michigan paper that affords Mayweather every excuse at his disposal. Or you're such a biased Mayweather fan and will defend anything he does to hold up the fight as he paints his opponent in an unflattering manner.

Unfortunately for Floyd Mayweather Jr. he can't have his way and stack the deck in his favor at the negotiating table so he has the edge in the ring in one form or another on fight night. Because his potential opponent is managed by the guy who taught Mayweather how to play the boxing game and has an answer and counter for everything team Mayweather tries to pull. On top of that Bob Arum knows he has in Manny Pacquiao the more marketable fighter who has compiled the more impressive body of work historically and creates more excitement in the ring when he fights.

Having said that Floyd is making the most out of the least and knows that he is the biggest fight out there monetarily for Pacquiao and Arum. That's why he's pushing all the buttons he can to create false controversies that aren't there. Mayweather will string this along for awhile and pretty soon he'll come up with something that indicates Pacquiao is either an android or a being from another planet disguised as a man impersonating a fighter and therefore must be

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thoroughly tested from head to toe.

Which says team Mayweather must really be impressed by Pacquiao's body of work over his last three or four fights. Which is more than I'm willing to give Manny as good as he's looked recently. I can think of more than a handful of great lightweights and welterweights from past eras that I'd consider overwhelming favorites to beat him.

Eventually team Mayweather is going to have to make a decision as to whether they stop the subterfuge and sign for a legitimate super-fight or Floyd retires undefeated. Mayweather is in a tough spot being the way he thinks. He loves money and a fight with Pacquiao would be like Fort Knox, yet on the other hand he loves saying he's undefeated and "who have beat me?" Obviously Pacquiao is the first fighter who he's contemplated fighting who he's not absolutely sure he can't lose to.

The answer to who has beat him is easy to refute in an historical sense. When reviewing Floyd's won-loss record, what stands out more than anything else are not the names on it, but it's more the names of fighters who are not on it on either side of the column.

Hopefully the games end soon and Mayweather and Pacquiao agree to some form of testing and sign to meet at 147 with the weigh in being the day before the fight.

At this time I don't believe Pacquiao is taking anything illegal, but his unwillingness to give in to all type of testing has somewhat created a slight cloud of suspicion. And if it does come out that he's used any form of illegal PEDs, (regardless that it's not a given that they add to a fighter's performance) the last few years of his career must come under suspicion and Floyd Mayweather is the manager and fighter of the decade.

****EDITOR NOTE: The negotiations for this fight went into another zone when Team Pacquiao announced Wednesday that they are filing a defamation suit against Team Mayweather.

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