

At NYC PC, Cheery Pacquiao Says He Thinks Margarito Knew Wraps Were Bad

Written by Michael Woods

Tuesday, 31 August 2010 19:00

Antonio Margarito looked relaxed, and ready to rock on the dais at Chelsea Piers in NYC on Wednesday, as he and Manny Pacquiao plugged their Nov. 13 showdown at Cowboys Stadium.

Margarito didnt even flinch, and even allowed himself a slight grin when some fan-wiseguy yelled, With a cast after emcee Todd duBoef cited Margaritos win over Miguel Cotto, a win that many view with suspicion after Margarito was found in possession of hardened hand wraps prior to his Jan. 2009 fight with Shane Mosley.

TSS readers are fully prepped on the Margarito saga, and know that the boxer breathed a sigh of relief when the Texas commission gave him a license to box after the California board turned him down when he applied for reinstatement.

Pacquiao, too, looked like he was in a comfort zone. Maybe thats because the Congressman, who admitted to TSS that politics is even harder than it looks, was playing hooky from a session in the Philippines.

Manny reiterated the statement that he made in the Tuesday leg of the press tour, when he said he thinks Margarito knew what was in his gloves, that trainer Javier Capetillo wasnt the lone gunman. But, Pacquiao said, Margarito deserves a second chance. Not much of a surprise, from the devout Christian, who said that he would not take extra pleasure at taking Margarito down, at punishing the man naysayers have tagged Margacheato. He also said he didnt know, or have an opinion, if Margarito has used illegal aids before, perhaps against Cotto.

From my standpoint, I see Margaritos immobility as playing right into Pacquaios strengths. Mannys pressure, as has been the rule lately, will break down a man who I think will show slippage because of inactivity.

Also, the catchweight, which will be firmed up shortly, and will likely be 150 pounds, will play into Pacquaios hands a little bit. (Which is why it is part of the promotion, duh.) Margarito was at 154 in his comeback fight, against Robert Garcia in Mexico in May, but it isnt easy to carve weight off a 5-11 frame. Manny, all 5-6 1/2 of him, will actually have to work, and eat a whole lot, to be in the 150-pound neighborhood. Which brings us to..

You probably know that Pacquiao will be gunning for the vacant WBC junior middleweight title. Why, you might wonder, will Pacquiao and Margarito not be fighting at the weight designated for a junior welterweight fight, 154 pounds or less. Margaritos co-manager Frank Espinoza didnt seem overjoyed when I asked him that query, and he redirected it to WBO executive Mauricio Sulaiman, subbing for dad Jose, out with a knee injury. Mauricio told TSS that he didnt ket know what the catchweight would be, but thought it would be for 151 pounds or less. He said that junior middles can weigh under 154 pounds, so he sees no problem with Team Pacquiao demanding a catchweight, though Manny will fight for a junior middleweight crown, not a sort-of-junior middleweight crown. It would be irresponsible for me to say there is a preference

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(on whether the fight will be fought at a catchweight), he said. Im not interested in belaboring the point here, but since I see Manny as a modern day David, unafraid of any Goliath, I admit Im not pleased that he has this built in accommodation at his disposal. Maybe it is his his people pushing for the catchweight, and he isnt truly for it. If yes, he should put his feet down. I think he can handle Margarito at 154, straight up.

Margarito trainer Roberto Garcia (NOT Robert Garcia, who lost to Margarito in May), a former super feather champ active 1992-2001, begs to differ; he promised an upset.

Freddie Roach isnt on that page. He said that he thinks Pacquiao will be the winner by knockout. Its a bold statement, but his skills are gonna be too much for Margarito.

Pacquiao grinned and said, Here we go again when it was his turn to speak. He promised a fan-friendly fight. One senses that he was disgusted somewhat by Joshua Clotteys reticence in their March meeting. He is a very aggressive fighter, as opposed to the last opponent, Joshua Clottey, who was always covering his face and didnt want to get hit. I want to satisfy all the fans.

He would not take the bait when asked if he would stop Margarito, though. I dont want to predict the fight, he said.

Manny told TSS that the game of politics is a little harder than it looks. Better or worse than he expected? Its worse, he said. Its not that easy being a public servant. Pacquiao proudly said he helped pass bills which aid his district.

Of course, the subject of Floyd Mayweather came up. Pacquiao said Im not disappointed that Floyd didnt pick up the challenge. He said he really dont know the reason why Mayweather didnt sign on to fight him, but did say that he has no restrictions on drug testing, or any demands on windows and such. I dont need him, he needs me, Pacquiao said. Compare my achievements to his.

SPEEDBAG Tix go on sale Sept. 18. They are scaled at \$700 ringside down to \$50 for the cheapies.

--The 49-year-old son of promoter Bob Arum is still missing. The Seattle resident was hiking solo near Seattle, at Storm King Peak summit, and was due back to his home Sunday night. His wife became alarmed when he didnt arrive and called authorities, the National Parks Service. She called the promoter Tuesday morning, and he left the press junket, which was in LA, to fly to Seattle and monitor the search for his son, one of three children. Theres no update, said Arums stepson, Todd duBoef, who handled the emcee chore. They are proceeding with rescue hikes, he told TSS. He hadnt heard from Bob as of noontime.

---Cowboys owner Jerry Jones wasnt present. The Boys have a game Thursday.

--Be on the lookout for a 60 Minutes piece on Manny coming out before the Margarito scrap.

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--Stellar photog Holger Keifels book of boxing photos is available at online booksellers. He showed me a peek at Chelsea Piers; of course, the art looks delectable. Heres a link to book, which features text by Thomas Hauser.

--I met the astute El Feroz in the flesh, and the man didnt disappoint. Bald as an eight ball, commanding in presence, charming in demeanor, it was a pleasure.