Much of the world is till unaware that you need no advantages when it comes to fighting anyone from flyweight to welterweight. Now, you're stepping up to junior middleweight to fight another welterweight who is stepping up to junior middleweight.

So why the catch weights?

On Saturday, at Cowboy Stadium in Dallas, Texas, the indomitable Manny "Pacman" Pacquiao (51-3-2, 38 KOs) meets Antonio "Tijuana Tornado" Margarito (38-6, 27 KOs) for the vacant WBC junior middleweight world title. With one proviso: Margarito must not weigh more than 150 the day before the fight.

The brains behind Pacquiao are fearful to allow the Filipino destroyer to fight without some kind of handicap against his opponents. It's ridiculous.

Despite annihilating his last five opponents in fearsome fashion Top Rank and perhaps an over-cautious Freddie Roach have continued to impose catch weights. There really is no need. The only thing it will accomplish is to possibly wreck Pacquiao's future legacy in the annals of boxing history.

Though Pacquiao heads toward a record-setting eighth weight division world title in an incredible feat, there have been others before the imposition of junior division titles that could have embarked on similar conquests. Plus, those other fighters of the past did not resort to imposing catch weights to win their titles.

It's overkill.

Does L.A. Laker center Pau Gasol ask that the rim be nine feet instead of 10 feet high when he plays the taller Yao Ming who has a six inch height advantage? No. Does Minnesota Viking quarterback Brett Favre ask that nobody sack him because he's over 40 years old? Nope. When boxer James Toney entered the Octagon against UFC veteran Randy Couture did he ask that no take downs be allowed? Of course not.

Pacquiao is a beast in the ring and does not need any advantages especially against Margarito who is a welterweight too.

The diminutive Filipino prizefighter with the flashing fists, mind-boggling speed and surprising power has proven over and over that he definitely does not need any advantages against anyone.

Pacquiao's greatest asset is his speed. Despite giving up five inches in height to Margarito, the Filipino who was recently voted into Congress in his country has mercilessly bludgeoned the last five opponents with ease. The Mexican fighter has never faced anyone comparable and he

knows it.

“I think this moment there is no better fighter than him. It’s another weight and he is a good fighter. He’s very fast with a lot of power,” said Margarito, 32, who is a former welterweight world titleholder. “Coming from such a small weight to do what he has done, he’s a great boxer.”

All the more reason that Pacquiao’s team dispense with fighting at catch weights. Historians may place an asterisk on the great fighter’s accomplishments and with good reason.

Armstrong, Robinson, and Duran

If you look at the greats of the past Henry Armstrong, Sugar Ray Robinson and Roberto Duran did not ask for catch weight handicaps nor did they need them when they moved up to heavier weight divisions.

Armstrong was much lighter and smaller than his opponents when he beat welterweight world champion Barney Ross, lightweight world champion Lou Ambers and featherweight world champion Pete Sarron all within a year in 1937-1938. He held all three titles simultaneously.

In 1952 Robinson moved up to light heavyweight to challenge then champion Joey Maxim at Yankee Stadium in New York City. The smaller and lighter Robinson weighed 157 pounds while Maxim walked into the ring at 173 pounds. It ended in the 14th round when Robinson was unable to continue due to a heat stroke, not Maxim’s punches.

Panama’s Duran began his career at 135 pounds but fought the much bigger Iran Barkley in 1989 for the middleweight world title. Duran knocked down the sturdy Barkley with a combination in the 11th round and won by split decision. It was a shocking victory.

Pacquiao’s victories are not shocking, but expected.

It’s getting so bad that the promoter has felt it necessary to create rumors that Pacquiao has endured a terrible training camp. Baloney. We’re talking about Pacquiao, not some mediocre over-the-hill prizefighter called in at the last moment to fill a fight card. Even Pacman laughs at the rumors.

“I’m in 100 percent condition, nothing to worry about,” said Pacquiao last week. “I’m excited. Tell the fans nothing to worry about me.”

Pacquiao’s still a dynamo.

After he retires the historians will look at his record and say he did it by handicapping his rivals. The time to stop applying catch weights begins right after this fight.

Don’t mess up Pacquiao’s legacy. He doesn’t need help. It’s like adding a special Teflon coating to a needle used to prick a ballon.

Pop! It's overkill.

Baby Assassin

Anthony "The Baby Assassin" Villarreal of Perris is on the Pacquiao-Margarito fight card on Saturday Nov. 13 and faces Filipino southpaw Richie Mepranuam (22-2) in a flyweight division match.

Villarreal (10-3, 5 KOs) recently defeated veteran Benjie Garcia by knockout at Riverside Convention Center. It was an impressive knockout win over Garcia who had fought current junior flyweight world champion Giovanni Segura tough on several occasions.

Fights on television

Thurs. Versus, 6 p.m. Urijah Faber (23-4) vs. Takeya Mizugaki (13-4-2).

Fri. Telefutura, 11:30 p.m., Jermell Charlo (13-0) vs. Luis Grajeda (10-0-1).

Sat. HBO pay-per-view, 6 p.m., Manny Pacquiao (51-3-2) vs. Antonio Margarito (38-6);

Brandon Rios (25-0-1) vs. Omri Lowther (14-2); Mike Jones (22-0) vs. Jesus Soto Karass (24-4-3); Guillermo Rigondeaux (6-0) vs. Ricardo Cordoba (37-2-2);