

WOODS TO PACQUIAO: Fight Sergio Martinez, Slay Another Goliath

Written by Michael Woods

Sunday, 21 November 2010 19:00

That was no lucky punch, lets make that clear right up front.

Sergio Martinez didnt need to have his fingers crossed, or carry a four leaf clover in his cup, or hope real hard, that the overhand left, delivered after he adjusted his feet with dancing With the Stars-ish smoothness, would land on Paul Williams jaw and chin, and scramble his brains for the count. This was the deliberate act of a marksman, and no one should dismiss that neuron re-arranger as anything else than the work of the consummate professional. No matter that his head was down as the punch hit home, and his eyes were looking at a ring card girl in row one, or something...Martinez invested fully, like Goldman Sachs during the boom boom bubble years while housing values exploded, against all odds and common sense. He knew what he was doing, where Williams was, and what that left could do, and he did it. To diminish his kayo crack as lucky is doing a disservice to his preparation and skills.

With the punch, and the knockout win, Martinez goes from a top ten pound for pounder to a top five, or top three pound for pounder, depending on how much you think of the Brothers K. But will that status reward him in a fashion one might expect him to be rewarded, in a just and right world? Er..you live in the US, where the top 1% have made out like bandits in the last ten years, while the lower and middle classes fight over ancillary issues, and the trickle down crumbs. You saw what that natural disaster did in Haiti. This world aint just, or right, much of the time. But that doesnt mean we cant hope for the correct thing to happen, the right thing, for the good guys to get whats coming, for the best matches to be made, for the voice of the fans to be heard, rather than the voice of the cash register.

This fan, and judging by some of your comments, you agree with me, thinks that it would be just, it would be right, if in his next fight, Manny Pacquiao, the marvelous multitasker, battled Martinez.

I know, I know. Mannys team has indicated again and again that hell drop down to a more natural weight channel. He battled a bigger man, Antonio Margarito, at a catchweight of 150 pounds or less. And he looked scintillating doing so. That weight channel looked to me like it fit Manny. Of course, I dont try and portray myself as being without bias, as being a clean slate of objectivity. I root for good guys, classy guys, humble guys, I favor fighters with a certain fan-friendly style. Yes, I admit to having preferences. To me, Manny is the best in the business, and will likely stay that way until Floyd Mayweather decides that he wants to regain his P4P slot at No. 1, and they hash it out.

Most of you seem to agree that Manny is No. 1 right now. And more and more of you are in agreement that hes now in the mix as an all time pound for pound top tenner. Manny himself doesnt try to shoot down the notion when someone, like 60 Minutes Bob Simon, wonders if he might be the best fighter of his and any other time.

So..if the No. 1 pound for pounder of today, who is in the conversation as we mull the alltime

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greats, cant get on the same page as the second best pound for pound pugilist, doesnt it make sense for him to tap the next best option? Doesnt it make sense for him to tell his team, his trainer, his advisor, his promoter, that he wants to go for that ninth crown in that ninth weight class, and try to take down Sergio Martinez, the middleweight champion?

Im tempted to get greedy, and inject a plug for Manny to toss the catchweight clause in the toilet, and demand of his people that he allow Martinez to weigh the division max..because I think so much of Pacquiao that I dont think he needs to have his bets hedged for him.

Im pretty darned sure he wouldve beaten Cotto if he allowed Cotto to weigh the welterweight max, not 145, and he wouldve handled Margarito with the same degree of difficulty if he allowed the Mexican to weight up to 154 pounds, and not a max of 150. But in the name of reasonableness, in a desire to encourage the match to be made, rather than to build blockades, the hell with it, lets do it at a catch weight.

How does 155 pounds,* max, sound?

Now, there are some other contenders out there, guys whod like to get the lucky scratchoff, get some of that Manny moolah. Juan Manuel Marquez and Shane Mosley have emerged as the top dogs in the hunt. Mosley came out of the gate hard, and in fact met with Bob Arum. He left the meeting saying he was 90% sure hed get the gig. But public and press sentiment hasnt been encouraging to those pressing to make Manny-Mosley. TSS has been out front with our lobbying effort. The Californian is 2-2-1 in his last five, and has looked close to shot at times in his last two outings, against Floyd Mayweather and Sergio Mora. Yes, he did give Antonio Margarito the business, but that fact doesnt mean as much since we saw how Manny handled the Mexican, and besides, that was in January 2009. He hasnt bowled over anyone since then, and the mileage, on a guy who started fighting at AGE EIGHT, might have finally caught up with him.

Marquez is a fine choice, and one we hear is supported by Freddie Roach. That makes sense, seeing as how hes the last man to give Manny problems. Their March 2008 clash resulted in a split decision win for Manny, and the validity of that call is still debated, on a daily basis, on message boards. Indeed, the fan interest, even if the bout is contested at a weight that might well be out of Marquez comfort range, 140 pounds, will be fierce. At age 37, Marquez isnt at his prime, but neither is he near as far away from it as Mosley is. We shall see what exactly he has left when he is pressured by the game and rugged Aussie Michael Katsidis on November 27. An upset for the 27-2 Aussie is unlikely but not unfathomable.

To me, Marquez is totally Plan 1B, a completely agreeable, logical choice for the Congressman. But 1A is Martinez. Not surprisingly, Martinez promoter Lou DiBella is of the same mind.

We would fight Manny, at 155 pounds, the promoter told TSS today. It would be an honor to fight him.

But the New York based dealmaker isnt getting ahead of himself, letting his hopes outstrip his

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reasoning powers. But I know it wouldnt happen next, he admitted. But I think that would be a real super fight.

Might Martinez just be too big for Pacman? His last three fights have been at 160, and he had to make 158 or less for this one. He hasnt found it easy, but could torture himself to make 154, just a pound more than he his favored class from 2002-2008. Hey, wasnt Margarito bigger than Manny, wasnt he 17 pounds more than Pacman on fight night?

Margarito was bigger, but hes nowhere as good as Martinez, DiBella said. One body shot hurt Pacquiao, he acknowledged, and he thinks Martinez skill level would result in more punishment for Pacquiao. Therefore, he understands if team Manny shies away from putting their guy at risk. I understand their saying Martinez is too big, DiBella said. But Id love to see Manny take up the challenge. If he took that, ltd be, Oh my God.

I dont think we should expect a decision within the week. We should expect for Arum to at least see how DiBella fighter Andre Berto looks this weekend against Freddy Hernandez. Wed love to be considered for that, said Dibella, now awash in an embarrassment of riches.

But Dibella has been bowled over by the interest, the reaction to the Sergio Stunner, that overhand left which put Williams on Dont Ask, Dont Tell Street. Yes, Manny-Sergio would be immense, he said. The pay per view would be bigger than Manny-Margarito, not even close.

To me, Manny is an Oh my God kind of guy. He could do it. No catchweight needed.

Manny, TSS is like the 1,000th most popular website in the Philippines. Are you reading? Its me, Editor Mike. I believe in you. I believe in your skills, and your will, and that you dont need no stinkin PEDs to get it done.

I believe you should listen to Manny, shrug off the input from the team, be the decider in chief.

Throw down the challenge to the middleweight champion, and take up the challenge, and do what you do best. Slay another Goliath.