

Every Great Story Has Three Acts

Written by Ralph Gonzalez

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Act I and II of Manny Pacquiao vs. Juan Manuel Marquez have been written. The boxing public is ready for Act III.

“I want a third fight with Pacquiao, Marquez stated after his scintillating ninth round T.K.O. victory over Michael Katsidis. “This is the fight everyone wants to see and he’s been avoiding us. We have a score to settle.

It’s hard to dispute the Mexico City native’s assertion that he should be next to fight the Filipino superstar.

He’s certainly proven himself worthy of a third match against the man considered by many to be the number one pound for pound fighter in the world. After facing Pacquiao twice and earning a draw and a split decision loss, it seems he’s the only fighter with the style to give “Pac-Man a serious challenge.

What about Floyd Mayweather Jr.? While “Lil’ Floyd is also considered by some to be the pound for pound best, he doesn’t seem to want any part of Pacquiao. His unreasonable demands, like asking for a blood test shortly before their proposed mega fight, made sure the negotiation process stalled. For the time being, Mayweather is out of the equation.

They’ve thrown some of boxing’s best at Pacquiao. Ricky Hatton, Antonio Margarito, Miguel Cotto and Joshua Clottey were all easily and impressively dominated by the naturally smaller buzz-saw. In the course of dismantling the well regarded fighters, he became a box office star. His legend grew and so did his bank account. Now, everyone wants a piece.

As far as a legitimate boxing attraction is concerned, Pacquiao is the new Oscar De La Hoya. He’s this generation’s “Golden Boy. When Pacquiao fights, it’s a big deal. When people in line at the post office are talking about the upcoming Pacquiao fight, you know he’s reached star status.

Boxing fans and even non-boxing fans around the world gather to watch him flutter his sting-full fists whether he fights Puerto Rican superstar Cotto or the much lesser known Clottey.

For his opponents it means making millions of dollars and the opportunity to become the man who topples the legend, with the hopes of becoming a legend himself.

Shane Mosley, Andre Berto and many others have made it known they want to be next to step into the ring against boxing’s newest marquee name. But it’s Marquez vs. Pacquiao, Act three, which makes most sense.

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Marquez's performance against Katsidis was nothing less than inspiring and spectacular. After getting dropped by the hard punching Greek in the third round, Marquez remained cool and like a surgeon, dissected his rugged, glory hungry opponent. By the ninth round, Katsidis was still coming forward but receiving Marquez's beautiful counter punches that caused him to stutter step on more than one occasion. The end came after referee Kenny Bayless recognized the body language of a crumbling warrior and put a stop to the bout. The dramatic affair made a strong case for Marquez.

The reality is that the first two Pacquiao vs. Marquez fights created a lot of unanswered questions. Pacquiao dropped Marquez three times in the first round of their first fight in 2004 and still ended up with a draw. "I've shown what I can do against Manny Pacquiao. He knocked me down three times and I was able to outbox and punish him for the rest of the fight, Marquez said afterwards.

Their second encounter in 2008 was also a classic that went to the judges' cards. Pacquiao won a close split decision. Marquez was dropped once but again got up and fought his way back to what some saw as a very close win for the 37 year old Mexican. "I feel like I had the edge. I was very surprised I didn't get the decision, he remembered.

Looking at the replay as they were about to announce the final score, you could see Pacquiao's initial worry and finally elation as the last judges card was announced in his favor by one point. It was close. Too close for comfort.

So what's stopping Marquez vs. Pacquiao III from being made? Golden Boy Promotions president and Marquez's promoter, Oscar De La Hoya, blames Pacquiao's promoter Bob Arum who refuses to co-promote with his L.A. based company due to a personal conflict. "People who don't realize that Bob Arum is hurting boxing are so naive, De La Hoya twittered recently. He added, "Boxing is suffering and fights are not being made because of him.

It's been reported that one of Golden Boy Promotions' partners, Shane Mosley, is a top candidate to fight Pacquiao. This would've been a great choice five years ago. Mosley, a future hall of famer, had the speed, stamina and youth to give Pacquiao all he could handle. But that was then, this is now.

Right now, it's Marquez's counterpunching, footwork and familiarity with Pacquiao's style that makes this match-up so intriguing. Can Pacquiao finish Marquez if he drops him again? Can Marquez survive, figure out and pick Pacquiao apart like he did Juan Diaz and Katsidis? These are questions that can only be answered with a third fight.

A great tale was written over the twenty four rounds these two men fought. But the story isn't over yet. Act three of Pacquiao vs. Marquez is a must. Without it, a great story will remain unfinished.