

BORGES: Who Is Looking Out For Miguel Cotto?

Written by Ron Borges

Tuesday, 05 January 2010 18:00

One has to wonder what poor Miguel Cotto is thinking this morning. He is burying his father at the same time he is trying to excavate his career. If ever he needed to be a fighter, it is now.

Even before his father and dearest friend, Miguel, Sr., died unexpectedly last weekend from an apparent asthma attack that led to a breathing problem that took his life at 57, Cotto had to be wondering about many things. He had to be wondering how much more punishment he can take after absorbing terrible beatings at the hands of first Antonio Margarito and then Manny Pacquiao.

He had to be wondering how much of himself was left behind in the ring those two nights, as he absorbed savage beatings until he could take no more. Surely he had to wonder if he would ever again be the fighter he once was, the recognized king of the welterweight division and one of the half dozen most feared fighters in the world.

But for Cotto, his wonderings had to be far worse than that in light of the odd turn the negotiations between Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather, Jr. have taken. Here stand Mayweather's promoters and advisors – Oscar De La Hoya, Al Hayman, Richard Schaefer and Leonard Ellerbe – all insisting Pacquiao submit to random drug testing for performance enhancing drugs for the richest fight in boxing history to go forward and there stands Pacquiao's promoter, Bob Arum, doing all he can to help Pacquiao make such testing useless.

What must Cotto be thinking as he mourns the passing of his father in Puerto Rico?

Here is Arum, who so loudly defended Margarito after he was caught wearing tampered hand wraps and a knuckle pad in his locker room the night he was to fight Shane Mosley. This is the same Margarito who gave Cotto the worst beating of his life not long before that fight with Mosley, a beating Cotto now believes was suspect under the quite reasonable assumption that if Margarito and his trainer were loading his hand wraps it didn't start against Mosley.

This is the same Arum who has steadfastly stood with Pacquiao as he has repeatedly refused to accept any kind of blood test that might actually be effective even as fighters like Kermit Cintron and Paulie Malignaggi, along with Mayweather's father, insist there's something funny about how heavy-handed Pacquiao has become even though he has never tested positive for anything.

This is also the same Arum who promotes Cotto while defending Margarito. The same Arum who promotes Cotto while defending Pacquiao. The same Arum who has suggested the comeback fight for Cotto should be a rematch with Margarito as soon as Margarito's suspension for wearing those plasterized handwraps is lifted.

This is Cotto's promoter? Conflicted, shall we say?

BORGES: Who Is Looking Out For Miguel Cotto?

Written by Ron Borges

Tuesday, 05 January 2010 18:00

In fairness, Arum nurtured Cotto from the time he turned professional, promoting him deftly enough to make him a star in Puerto Rico and New York while leading him through the often troubled waters of prize fighting. He helped get him into position to win world titles and make millions of dollars. He helped get him on HBO and in some of the biggest fights. Yet when issues were raised about tampered hand wraps and Cotto wondered if he had been a victim of them, there was Arum hollering that Margarito was being railroaded.

Now with Pacquiao sitting under a cloud of his own making by refusing to agree to reasonably effective random blood tests for PEDs and blood doping (professional athletes long ago lost the presumption of innocence when it comes to PEDs like steroids and HGH because when is the last time they didn't deny it right up to the moment they got busted?), here is Cotto's promoter again hollering that a grave injustice has been done to Pacquiao.

Well, what if one has been done to Cotto? Or maybe two? Cotto will never really know for sure in either case. Only Margarito and Pacquiao know what they were doing, or not doing, going into their fights with Cotto. Cotto doesn't know and neither does Arum, although the former wouldn't be human if he didn't have his suspicions.

What doubts he must be wrestling with today about his past and his future in boxing as he sits in his grief over the loss of his father. To whom does he turn? Where does Miguel Cotto go now? Not even he probably knows.

He has asked the public to give his family time to heal from the passing of his father, the man who started him in boxing and in life, and he deserves that. Yet you wonder, as a judge sits trying to mediate the mess Pacquiao, Arum, Mayweather and Golden Boy Promotions have made of the biggest fight of the New Millenium, what Miguel Cotto must be thinking. Surely one thing is this – who looked out for him?