

Now Is When Juan Manuel Marquez Really Needs To Follow Nacho's Plan

Written by Frank Lotierzo

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There's an insightful article in the "Manila Standard Today" (2/12/10) by Ronnie Nathanielsz in which he reveals some thoughts of Ignacio "Nacho" Beristain, the trainer of Juan Manuel Marquez. In the article Nacho discusses how he believes Golden Boy Promotions owner Oscar De La Hoya and company CEO Richard Schaefer are attempting to exploit Marquez by trying to make a fight between him and WBA junior welterweight titled holder Amir Khan.

The article by Nathanielsz states that it won't be the first time that Marquez is being used for fodder. Most remember that Marquez signed to fight undefeated Floyd Mayweather Jr. in a welterweight bout in which Floyd weighed-in two pounds above the 144 pound contract limit. Mayweather chose to pay a \$600,000 fine instead of losing the two pounds in order to make the contract weight.

Marquez was dominated by Mayweather for 12-rounds and lost a lopsided unanimous decision. Some have tried to make the case that Mayweather is such a great boxer and technician, that's why he dominated to the extent he did. And while it's true Mayweather is a terrific technician and fundamentally sound boxer, his weight and size played a huge part in how the fight unfolded. No, not the result, but more in the way Mayweather was able to control Marquez.

Marquez fought as a featherweight (126) from 1993 through 2008. Then three times as a junior lightweight and only twice as a lightweight, picking up the WBA lightweight title in his previous fight before facing Mayweather as a welterweight. Mayweather, being significantly bigger than Marquez, muscled Juan Manuel all over the ring. His strength advantage made it impossible for Marquez to hurt him or position him to where he needed him to be, let alone having the strength to attempt boxing Mayweather. Luckily Mayweather isn't a big puncher as a welterweight because if he were I bet Beristain would've tried to persuade Marquez out of taking the fight. And that's because he cares about his fighter more than the money he could potentially make by sacrificing him to the younger and bigger lions GBP wants to feed him to.

Nathanielsz reported that "Pat Sheehan of the British newspaper The Sun reported that Marquez' veteran trainer and one of the most respected men in boxing – Ignacio "Nacho" Beristain, has pleaded with Marquez to put his health before money. Beristain fears the 36-year-old Marquez is being used as no more than a "name" on Khan's record and has accused Golden Boy of exploiting his fighter."

And Beristain is exactly right. Promoters don't care about fighters and only want to make fights that'll set up their new and young troops. When Oscar De La Hoya got into the promotions end of the business, many had high hopes and anticipated that he'd be different. Only he's not and may even be worse. You'd think a fighter who got every break and benefit by promoters throughout his entire career wouldn't exploit fighters like others have, but his track record indicates he is no different and can't acquire enough wealth.

I know that fighters are by no means angels, because they're certainly not. And when they've

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worked hard like Marquez to build up a marquee name as his is, they want to milk it in sometimes and cash in off of it. And even when they have people around them who are looking out for their best interest, they seldom listen and make their own decisions. Add to that fighters the caliber of Marquez never think they are in over their head against the new prospect like they once were. And in some ways that's bad because it's doubtful that Marquez harbors the slightest bit of reservation in facing a young puncher the likes of Amir Khan.

"I told Juan Manuel that Khan is not a fighter to be taken lightly. Khan is very strong and it's not a good fight right now because Marquez has not fully recovered from the Mayweather fight which was just brutal, I think it's better to get another opponent. He (Marquez) should not be exploited again. He deserves to retire like a true champion and not as someone's stepping stone," Sheehan quoted Beristain as saying.

Nacho is right. There's nothing better in boxing than watching a great fighter retire with their health, wealth, dignity and respect. Juan Manuel Marquez has a chance to do that which would add his name to a short list of fighters who currently make up that list. However, I wouldn't bet on that happening and somewhere in the near future someone like De La Hoya or someone in his position will sweeten the pot a little bit and lure him into taking a fight that he can't win and hopefully won't get hurt in.

Nacho's not a spineless guy when it comes to Marquez. He is, after all, the guy with the good sense not to pull the plug on the fight when Pacquiao had Marquez down three times in the first round of their fight. So it's not like he's an alarmist. He knows when something isn't right with his fighter.

Perhaps someone close to Marquez should answer the following trivia question.

Who's the only undefeated champion in recent years to retire without a loss, and not make a comeback? Ricardo Lopez. Beristain's masterpiece. Never lost a fight, kept his money and his dignity, and didn't get hurt in the ring.

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