

## Manny Says He's Content With Career If Mayweather Fight Doesn't Happen

Written by Michael Woods

Thursday, 25 February 2010 18:00

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Say it ain't so, Manny.

Please tell us that you aren't going to get sucked into the politics vortex, and let that uglier-than-boxing arena kidnap you, and keep you. At the top of your game, a seven division champion, you aren't going to win a Filipino congressional seat, and bid boxing adieu, are you? Just when we've come to savor your status as a commendable role model for this sport which is in such need of humble, virtuous ambassadors?

The rumor mill has been grinding out rumors that Pacman will exit the sweet science after he fights Joshua Clottey on March 13 in Dallas, and the boxer addressed the issue on a Friday conference call.

"This is my last fight before the election," he said, and left the door fully ajar for pugilism post election. "I'm not going to say I'm going to retire."

Promoter Bob Arum said he'd be OK with Manny hanging up the gloves after the Clottey scrap and that he'd throw the rapidly climbing all-time Pound for Pounder a big ole bash if he decided to wave bye bye. "He's the best fighter I've ever seen," Arum opined. "I'm an old guy so I never saw Marciano, and Sugar Ray Robinson fight in person. And you can't tell much by watching films. But that includes Sugar Ray Leonard, and Ali, and Hagler. Manny's the best fighter I've ever seen." Arum reiterated Manny's anything-is-possible-but-he's-leaning-towards-keeping-on-fighting declaration. "He's leaving his options open."

Let me go on record, and please mark this statement: there ain't no way Manny's leaving after knocking out Clottey. (You can mark that prediction, as well..I'm with Arum on Manny-as-the-best-I've-seen stance, think Pacquiao's untouchable right now, and his hand speed and angles will be befuddling to the Ghanian). Nope..I see Manny going another five or more years. I'm guessing he does too. When asked what sort of fighter could take him down at this stage of his career, Pacquiao pondered and answered, "When I get old."

Now, regarding another matter that continues to hang over this promotion...will I be so bold in stating that I believe Pacquiao-Mayweather will DEFINITELY happen? No..As long as the announced lawsuit versus Team Mayweather is in play, I think that's a severe hurdle to making it happen. It will be hard for Team Pacquiao and Team Mayweather to separate the suit, and the purely boxing elements of the negotiations, if and when they try and hash out a deal again.

I do, however, wonder if the suit actually gets beyond the talk stages, though. Why hasn't the lawsuit been officially filed yet? For the record, two calls to the office of attorney Daniel Petrocelli, repping Pacquiao, were not returned, so I can't say for certain where the suit stands, beyond what Arum says.

Pacquiao says he'll be secure in his legacy if he and Floyd never tangle, and Arum says he too

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will be able to leave this plane settled if Pacquiao doesn't fight Mayweather. "I'm OK, I'm content," the fighter said when asked if he'd be alright never battling Floyd. "I don't really need to fight Mayweather. My achievements in boxing are enough for me." Now, Roach, I'm not so sure about him. He seems to reeeally want Manny to shut Floyd's mouth. "I'd like to shut Floyd up, of course," he said on the call. "I know Manny will knock him out, and the whole world would be happy."

My take: don't think for a second that because Pacquiao comes off as an almost angelic figure, always benevolent and beaming, that he's not capable of posturing for leverage. If part of him does think that Mayweather in fact wants to take him down, and hasn't deliberately shot down a fight with his ultra-stringent testing demands, then he'd be smart to send signals to Mayweather that he doesn't crave a battle. A lil reverse psychology, right? I still haven't determined, and I don't know anyone who has outside of Floyd's inner circle, what his deal is, if he is truly confident of his ability to better Manny, or if his unease with Pacquiao's skill set has lead him to sabotage a showdown..Manny wouldn't publicly declare without reservation that he thinks Floyd fears him, or for whatever reason doesn't want the fight. Like a skilled politician, he said for whatever reason, Floyd doesn't seem like he wants to fight Pacquiao right now. Unlike a politician, he turned down a chance to score a point when he took the high road, and said he was not "angry" at Floyd for insinuating PED usage, but rather was "disappointed." Gosh, Manny is a skilled pol..is there any doubt he's ready for Congress??

The issue of testing..surprise, surprise...popped up. Arum continued to hammer home the point, which I fully embrace, that no fighter should be attempting to co-opt the system, and make unilateral demands above and beyond what the state commissions are adhering too. He likened Mayweather's demands to a situation where the New York Yankees Alex Rodriguez strikes out against a certain Red Sox hurler a bunch of times, and then demands the pitcher be tested for PEDs. No, not a perfect analogy, because Floyd hasn't been whopped by Manny. He's making the demand and muddying the waters with insinuations before he's thrown down. But I'm in Arum's camp on this matter... "It causes chaos," Arum said. "No one has anything against random testing (or non-invasive urinalysis)." But, he continued, why hasn't Golden Boy been similarly stringent in regards to Roy Jones, who has tested positive for steroids ten years ago, and why hasn't Mayweather been as vocal against known PED user Shane Mosley? Because, he suspects, Mayweather may well not want the Pacquiao fight, and he used the is-Manny-dirty ploy to try and get into Manny's mind. If we do get the bout, what happens, Bob? "Manny-Mayweather is a no contest," Arum said. "Pacquiao would wipe the ring of him."

Along those same lines, one reporter asked Manny why he wouldn't accept Floyd's testing parameters, so he could clear his name. This reporter, I think, as a veteran, should know better. Unless Manny were tested on a daily basis, for three months before a bout, until right after the bout, then even if he tested clean, there would still be those who wouldn't be convinced that his rise from 106 to 147 pounds wasn't aided by PED use. If Floyd tells Manny to jump through 100 hoops, and he does so, there will be folks who won't be satisfied until he jumps through 101.

Arum brought up a couple megamatches that didn't come off, even though it looked like they were a given, or were delayed: Bowe-Lewis; Tyson-Foreman; and Tyson-Holyfield. The 78-year-old dealmaker has a most healthy take on the matter: "These things happen." Or...they

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don't...and the world will keep turning regardless. And compelling matches will continue to get made. But Arum sounded beyond stubborn when he said that no fighter of his, under his watch, would get pushed around at the negotiating table around the issue of PED testing.

"Mayweather," he said, "was totally out of line in making demands."

Let's bottom line it, Bob: will Pacquiao-Mayweather happen? Only, the promoter said, if Team Mayweather softens their stance, and trusts in the testing protocols of the commissions.

As of today, February 25, I do not see that happening, people. What about you? Weigh in!