

## This Time Clotley's Non-Response Was Troubling

Written by Frank Lotierzo

Saturday, 27 February 2010 18:00

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This past Thursday there was a press call that featured Team Clotley along with promoter Bob Arum. Personally, I don't find fighter press outings and conferences to be all that informative. Sure, they can fill a writers' notebook with a lot of quotes. But having been around and associated with many world class fighters and champions, I know fighters are never going to disclose much about how they really feel and think about their upcoming fight and opponent. Obviously there are exceptions like Bernard Hopkins, James Toney, Floyd Mayweather and David Haye. However, they are the exception and certainly not the rule.

Most of today's fighters aren't going to shed anything that most observers haven't already figured out. Managers, trainers and promoters are more than willing to talk - and that's because on fight night when the bell rings they step down and out of the ring. Whereas the fighters have to back up what they may have said during the run-up to a big fight or main event like Pacquiao-Clotley. Which is not the most comfortable position to be in if you're the fighter who lost.

During the conference call, Joshua Clotley was pressed as to what it is he sees about Pacquiao that makes him confident that he can beat him on March 13th. Others asked what it is that he had to improve on himself in order to become a better fighter. Clotley retorted by basically saying he's had a great training camp and is ready for the fight. The only thing Joshua said of substance was that by him being able to block a lot of Pacquiao's punches, Manny will in turn be a little more open for him to hit. Which of course is true. The problem is Pacquiao throws punches in bunches from a lot of unconventional angles. Meaning that if he's jammed with the first one or two he throws, three, four, five and six will be re-routed to the open areas. Which depending on how Clotley's chin holds up will either be his undoing or leave Pacquiao vulnerable to the presumably stronger Clotley.

The fact that fighters usually don't give up much to writers and commentators before the fight is just the way it is. Yet often you can tell that it's more the case of them holding something back and they are just keeping it to themselves so they don't show their hand before the fight. In fact Clotley admitted during the call that he didn't watch film of his opponents' fights. Then he said he's seen enough of Pacquiao to know how he fights. Okay, that's fair but here are the concerns I came away with.

One - Clotley is definitely troubled by not being able to be re-united with his first trainer, Ghanian Godwin Kotey, who was denied a US visa. Not only is that big for him emotionally, but it could turn out to be a disaster tactically. Secondly - Clotley gave me the impression that he really isn't sure what he wants to do or try to prevent Pacquiao from doing during the fight. And Manny Pacquiao is the wrong fighter to try and adjust to on the fly.

Granted, Pacquiao can disrupt the best formulated fight plan in the world during the heat of battle with his hand speed and shocking power. But if Clotley is under the impression that he can sit back and try and wait on what Pacquiao does - and then try to adapt to that and/or take it

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away--that's a colossal miscalculation. If Clotney was a little more aggressive he could use Pacquiao's mindset of being a real fighter against him, but that's not who he is.

The fact that Clotney didn't project that he's of the mindset and belief that he's going to fight as the bigger and stronger fighter is not a good sign. If it hasn't been drummed into Clotney's head by now that the only way he can win this fight is by forcing himself physically on Pacquiao, and hopefully that will be enough to break down the smaller opponent, then he really doesn't have much of a chance to score the upset. Pacquiao is a better boxer with faster hands and is the more accurate and sharper puncher. There's no way Clotney can sit back and try waiting and reacting to what Pacquiao is trying to do. But that's the impression I was left with as to what his approach to the fight will be after hearing him talk about it for 50 plus minutes.

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