

Arum's Concern Over Clotley Is Believable

Written by Frank Lotierzo

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Manny Pacquiao's head trainer Freddie Roach was recently quoted in a few Philippine papers saying he believes his fighter, Manny Pacquiao, can knock out Joshua Clotley in nine rounds when they meet at Dallas Cowboys Stadium Saturday. As most boxing fans know Roach is one of Pacquiao's biggest advocates. Roach also said on a recent conference call that Manny will knock out Floyd Mayweather if they ever fight. Okay, we all get it -- Roach believes that Pacquiao is a special fighter. And Roach seems to be basically a standup guy so we can all live with what he says about most fighters.

However, promoter Bob Arum is another story. Arum really could convince eskimos that not only do they need ice, he's also the only one who can deliver really cold ice. On the conference call with team Clotley last week, Arum said that no one fight or fighter is bigger than the sport of boxing. And it's absurd that the boxing commission should change their protocol as to how fighters should be tested for performance enhancing drugs the way Floyd Mayweather wanted Manny Pacquiao tested in order to make a fight between them. Can you imagine what Arum would be saying about Pacquiao if he represented Floyd Mayweather? Talk about default guilt.

During the call Arum also said Manny Pacquiao is the greatest fighter he's ever seen during his time in boxing. Even greater than Muhammad Ali, Sugar Ray Leonard and Marvin Hagler. Obviously it must have slipped Bob's mind that he promoted a couple of Roberto Duran's fights some years back. Meaning if we exclude heavyweights from the pound-for-pound equation, Arum promoted at least two fighters that I'd rank above Pacquiao, in Duran and Leonard. So it all depends on which side of the table in which Arum sits as to what his take is on a particular situation or topic. Then again he's a promoter and his job is to make the case which sheds the best light on his vested interest at a given time.

Having said that, it doesn't mean Arum can't get it right sometimes when he's talking about a fight involving two of his fighters. And he did last week when he said in Philstar.com, "I don't know how you'll knock Clotley out. This fight is going to be harder than the Cotto fight because Clotley is more durable than Cotto."

That's not what Arum was saying after Miguel Cotto won a razor close decision over Clotley last June to set up the Pacquiao-Cotto bout, but that was then and this is now. Only Arum is right about this one. Clotley has never been in trouble or on the verge of being stopped in his career. Whereas Cotto was hurt and dropped by other fighters before he faced Pacquiao.

"Clotley is bigger and stronger but Manny is a much better boxer, a much better athlete. And if Manny loses, I would be sorry for Manny. But that's boxing and a lot of things can happen. Clotley is a very good and a very dangerous welterweight," said Arum.

After hearing Arum speak about Clotley, it's easy to glean that he does have some legitimate trepidation about this fight. As he should. Despite Pacquiao being the better boxer with faster hands and the fact that he possesses the more sophisticated and varied offense, Clotley's

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physicality is something that shouldn't be overlooked. And just because Pacquiao is known to rise to the occasion in a big spot and Clotney's reputation is the opposite, Arum is smart enough to know that Clotney just may reach down and draw on everything he has and put it all together in what is surely the signature bout of his career. Especially after Clotney has been reminded repeatedly of how he didn't press Cotto enough down the stretch and that's what cost him the fight.

In fact Arum has even laid the groundwork for a rematch if Pacquiao were to be upended by Clotney. "If Clotney is successful then I would go immediately to Clotney who is under promotion to us and ask him to do a rematch. He's not obligated but I would ask him for a rematch," said Arum.

It's always hard to tell what Arum's true thoughts are because he's one of the better salesmen to ever promote professional boxing. But this time he gets the benefit of the doubt in expressing his genuine concern for his prized possession, Manny Pacquiao, regarding his upcoming fight with Joshua Clotney. Remember, this will not be a possibly drained Cotto who had to make 145. Clotney is being afforded the luxury of weighing in at the welterweight limit of 147 pounds, and very well may enter the ring above the middleweight limit of 160.

Clotney should provide Pacquiao with the toughest hurdle of his career, and that's an honest and legitimate take on the fight. Then again Arum may be talking up Clotney now because he's worried that Joshua isn't being seen as a genuine threat (and that will hurt in PPV buys.) Although promoting a rematch between the two guys would be lucrative for Arum, clearly it's a financial disaster for him if Clotney wins. There's nothing on the horizon that comes close to Pacquiao-Mayweather, and a Clotney win would wreck that. Having taken everything into consideration, I do believe Arum's concern and this fight isn't a gimmie for Pacquiao.

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