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As much as it hurts to agree with HBO's Jim Lampley, he must be given his due when he gets it right. And he did so when he said on the network's pre-fight special "Countdown To Pacquiao-Clottey," something to the effect of how it's been a while since we've seen a fighter who's had a run of outstanding performances like we've seen from Manny Pacquiao circa 2008-2010.

It's amazing how there are still some doubters. Forget about who's a worshiper of one fighter and a hater of another. If anyone reading this can't recognize that Manny Pacquiao is a rare and once in a generation talent and fighter, you don't know what you're watching. My opinion of Pacquiao is based on lengthy personal experience and objective eyes that are wide open while watching him fight, and a boxing aptitude that rarely fails me when evaluating fighters. I'm not paid or part of Team Pacquiao or Team Anybody. I implicitly trust my eyes and instincts tell me all I need to know. And what they scream out is that it'll take a special fighter and talent to beat Manny Pacquiao at this time if he stays hungry and focused and isn't distracted by his political ambition.

The fighter to beat Pacquiao will either have to be a Thomas Hearns clone and how many of them are fighting today? Or have the mental toughness, chin, strength and enough punch to force Pacquiao back and to fight off the ropes, something that not many guys have been able to force him to do, and where he's the least effective. Because if you allow him to come to you and have nothing in your arsenal to hold him off with, it's almost impossible to out-box him. And if you have to fight him as he dictates, good luck because that's him at his best.

If there were a Hearns fighting in the welterweight division today, Pacquiao would probably meet his Waterloo. Hearns had enough beard to handle Pacquiao, if Manny could even get to it. Pacquiao would be there for Hearns's ramrod jab and missile like right hand, something that would greatly impede his aggression. As unique as Pacquiao is, he's never experienced anything like Hearns. He'd be at the end of the Hitman's reach and he'd never get a chance to befuddle him with his unconventional and sporadic assault. And it's not like Pacquiao is hard to find since he has the mindset to attack and try to get his opponent out with every punch he throws. If Manny gets hurt, his instinct is always going to be to fire back. He's even shown a willingness to take a few from his opponent if that's what it takes to open them up. Only that would've been suicide against Hearns, and Sugar Ray Leonard as well.

For a fighter in the welterweight division in 2010 to beat Pacquiao, he must posses something in his arsenal that concerns him or forces him to have to react and address what they're doing as much as his opponent is concerned with what he's doing. As far as devising a strategy to beat Pacquiao on paper, that's great. Now try and find the fighter who has what it takes mentally and physically to implement the ideal fight plan. That's like saying if you make Marvin Hagler fight as the aggressor and force him to cut the ring off, (which wasn't him at his best) he's beatable. Great, all you have to do now is find the next Sugar Ray Leonard.

At this point it seems like it's almost impossible to fathom any active welterweight beating Pacquiao by out-boxing him. He's just too overwhelming and attacks and throws every punch with the purpose of taking his opponent's head off nor does he fear what's coming back at him. And he also throws his punches in multiples. In order to box Pacquiao, you must be physically strong and have a decent enough punch to prevent him from coming at you as if you're handcuffed, thus allowing him to make it a street fight.

Is Floyd Mayweather that boxer? At this point I'm not sure and hope that we find out sometime this fall if he gets by Shane Mosley on May 1st. One thing is certain, Mayweather doesn't posses a single punch or combination in his repertoire to hurt or discourage Pacquiao from coming at him full bore. The speculation about that is over and Mayweather will at some point have to fight Manny off and gain his respect if they ever do meet. So he'll probably need a backup plan in which he's able to tie him in a knot and slowly take the bullets out of his guns. Picturing Mayweather and perhaps Mosley actually beating up Pacquiao is hard to envision in 2010.

Mosley probably has the better chance to do it, but he'd absorb plenty of punishment in the process. Although, Pacquiao-Mosley is the best and most exciting fight that could be realized from a style vantage point at this time if Mosley is the same fighter who took apart Antonio Margarito in January of 2009.

If Mosley beats Mayweather, Shane actually matches up better with Pacquiao because he probably has the physical strength to force Pacquiao back and perhaps keep him on his heels, something that would aid him in a big way. Pacquiao has never had to fight uphill since he's moved up from junior lightweight. Mosley has a great chin, fast hands and is capable of throwing straight lefts and rights. He's also mentally and physically tough and can't be intimidated or made to fight just to survive. Mosley also has never been handled by any fighter his size, including Miguel Cotto. Actually, Cotto was smart to counter-punch Mosley instead of engaging Shane like he wanted him too. Pacquiao is of a different mindset and will engage Mosley because that's what he does best.

Other than Mayweather and Mosley, there's no other welterweight who comes close to having a chance to beat Pacquiao. (EDITOR NOTE: What if Paul Williams could make 147?) Mayweather may lack the strength and physicality, and Mosley may no longer posses the speed and probably has participated in too many tough fights during his career to win a war of attrition in 2010.

To beat Pacquiao this year it'll take a fighter who was blessed at birth with the necessary skill and tools to do it. He can't be manufactured or trained to do so in any boxing gym by any great trainer, the few that are still around. The fighter to do it will either need the size and power to discourage Manny from trying to attack, or he'll need the mental toughness, strength and gumption to force him to back off and be in the unfamiliar position of him having to fight his opponent off of him instead of the opposite.

Having a great boxing IQ and aptitude is great, but if you're not physically capable of executing your fight plan, it's all for naught and the best plan in the world will implode from overwhelming

pressure. So you can get all the cookbook handicappers you want to devise the plan that fits your perfect boxing world. But applying it in the ring is like having a gun in your car during a bar fight. Only the gun isn't gonna do you any good under the front seat of the car, so you don't really have a gun.

Manny Pacquiao is putting together a helluva a resume. And since he's moved up in weight his punch activity has escalated. And that's because the bigger fighters he's confronted are more awed by his speed and unorthodox attack, which induces them to punch less so they're not as wide open, which in turn affords him the opportunity to get off more and dictate the terms of the fight. Like all greats, it'll take another great to beat him while he's at his peak. It took a Duran to beat Leonard, a Leonard to beat Hearns and a Frazier to beat Ali.

Looking back, Erik Morales, Marco Antonio Barrera and Juan Manuel Marquez were all great fighters between 126 and 130, weren't they?

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