

## TEST FORUM

Written by Eric Raskin

Wednesday, 16 November 2011 11:16

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We left off yesterday with the letter “M” and with the revelation that Twitter is an exclusively Mexican form of social media. We now continue with the rest of the alphabet, and hopefully nothing further from the world according to Bob Arum.

N is for Ninth Round

Pacquiao-Marquez III was probably the least entertaining fight of their trilogy, but only by a

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small margin; it was still a hell of a fight. And round nine stacks up pretty damned well against any of the other 35. I'd need to watch it again to determine whether it could possibly beat out the opening round of James Kirkland-Alfredo Angulo for Round of the Year, but it's certainly in the discussion with one fantastic exchange after another and Pacquiao probably producing his best offense of the evening (good enough to just eke out the round, in my opinion). I won't have an opportunity to watch this fight again until the HBO replay on Saturday night, but I'm really looking forward to re-living round nine.

### O is for One-Man Chants

Between undercard fights, Spanish-language broadcasters Julio Cesar Chavez and Marco Antonio Barrera were making their way across the arena floor, and a drunk fan got a determined solo chant going, first yelling "Cha-vez! Cha-vez!" and then "Bar-re-ra! Bar-re-ra!" None of his friends were joining in, but he was undeterred. Sometimes, it's not about the volume of your chant; it's about the volume of your spirit. Or the volume of spirits you've imbibed.

### P is for Puck

Bet you thought "P" would be for Pacquiao! I'm not big on taking the obvious route, so instead, this letter is for Wolfgang Puck, whose restaurant at the MGM Grand is somehow the only one in the whole building that still serves food after midnight, even on a Saturday night. I can't wrap my mind around how a Vegas casino could be so full of restaurants that keep Salt Lake City hours. Needless to say, I ate at Puck's a couple of times over the course of the week, including at the media dinner on Thursday, when I was able to stuff myself on Arum's dime. I sat next to one of my favorite broadcasters, Rich Marotta, and after the usual boxing chit-chat, I discovered why it is that I like Rich so much personally: He's a die-hard Springsteen fan. Once someone has that box checked, I know we're going to get along.

### Q is for Questions

I have quite a few on my mind in the wake of Pacquiao-Marquez III. Here are the biggies: Is Floyd Mayweather more likely to want to fight Pacquiao now? (Answer: Absolutely.) Is Arum more likely not to let Pacquiao anywhere near Mayweather now? (Answer: Absolutely.) If Mayweather-Pacquiao happens in 2012, how many PPV buys were lost because Pacquiao

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would be coming off this mediocre performance? (Answer: At least 500,000.) Has there ever before been demand for a fourth fight between two rivals when one of said rivals had yet to post an official win in the series? (Answer: Not that I can think of.) Who is the pound-for-pound king right now? (Answer: Mayweather. It's hard to respect any list that doesn't place him at number one, inactive as he's been the last few years.)

### R is for Roach

One of my favorite moments all week came during Thursday's morning's "trainers roundtable," where the two trainers sit in a circle of media members and answer questions for 20 minutes or so. It's just like a press conference, only it feels informal. Anyway, someone asked Freddie Roach about Mayweather reserving that May 5 date, and Roach was quick to insist it was only Leonard Ellerbe who made that announcement, asked "Who the f--- is Leonard Ellerbe," called him a "gopher boy," then exclaimed, "He's Buboy!" I'm not sure how Buboy would feel about all this if word got back to him, but still, I love the comparison. I'd pay big money for Buboy vs. Ellerbe on a Pacquiao-Mayweather undercard. Meanwhile, Roach was great at the postfight presser also, admitting he doesn't really want to fight Marquez a fourth time because it's such a difficult matchup, but saying he feels it has to happen.

### S is for Sombrero

I couldn't hear Marquez's postfight interview with Max Kellerman, but I did get to see that hilarious image of the lightweight champ wearing nothing but a sombrero over his junk. It wasn't quite Mayweather and Larry Merchant, but it was a memorable HBO PPV postfight interview just the same. (Runner-up choice for the letter "S": Scent Of A Champion. That's what the sign read at the little table where they were selling Manny Pacquiao's cologne. I wish I was making this stuff up.)

### T is for Tecate Brunch

I'm a member of the media. Therefore, I am uncontrollably drawn to free food. Tecate hosted a free media brunch on Friday morning, so you'd better believe I was there. Some people made some sort of presentation in Spanish, there were several scantily clad Tecate girls, and the brunch was delicious. But the best part was watching people drink Tecate at 10:00 in the

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morning. Vegas is kind of a messed-up place, when you get right down to it.

### U is for Upset(s)

In the opening bout of the pay-per-view telecast, Juan Carlos Burgos handed Luis Cruz his first defeat in what can be termed a mild upset (and a solid fight). Then Prescott came one round away from scoring a big upset over Alvarado. And lastly, Marquez had not just a decision and a belt taken from him by questionable judging, but he missed out on what would probably have been regarded as the Upset of the Year as well. I tell you, even though I insisted all along the fight was not a mismatch, I never really gave Marquez much chance of winning. When I arrived in Vegas and the odds on Marquez were 7-1, I didn't give it a second thought. But on Friday night, they rose to 10-1, and I seriously debated putting 20 bucks on him. But I didn't pull the trigger on the bet. I started really kicking myself by round five, and then the judges bailed Pacquiao, and me, out. Best great bet I ever didn't make. Or something like that.

### V is for Video Streaming

As I discussed with my HBO.com cohorts all week, the wireless signal in the MGM Grand rooms was strong enough for general surfing, but weak enough to make streaming any video a frustrating experience. My theory: This is a scheme to encourage people to pay for the hotel's in-room adult video fare. You can't convince me otherwise.

### W is for Won't Get Fooled Again

The song to which Marquez entered the ring turned out to be a bit ironic in terms of its title lyric, but worked fantastically for getting the crowd pumped. Really, both ring entrances produced a great vibe. Top Rank did a first-rate job with the whole production, the crowd was divided and deafening, and Pacquiao's entrance featured that amazing moment where he steps into the arena for the first-time and a massive smile spreads across his face. Pacquiao the boxer may have lost a little luster this weekend, but Pacquiao the person did not.

### X is for X-tra Effort

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At the preflight press conference on Wednesday, HBO Pay-Per-View boss Mark Taffet reached deep into the well of pull-your-hair-out clichés to inform us, “These two athletes are going to give 150 percent in the ring Saturday night.” Wow. That is a serious amount of effort. However, by my final CompuTry calculations, it seemed Marquez only gave 142 percent, and Pacquiao a mere 139. A note to the entire human population: Anytime you want to convey the message that someone is going to try their best, “100 percent” will do the trick.

Y is for Yakking

I did not throw up on my flight from Vegas to Chicago on Sunday. But I came awfully close. I’ve never had a flight that approached this one for turbulence, and when combined with my alcoholic intake from the night before and lack of sleep, I very nearly lost my Wolfgang Puck cheeseburger. Normally, I have no qualms about flying; I’m always good at either sleeping or getting work done. But this flight flat-out sucked.

Z is for Charlie Z.

I had never heard of this Charlie Zelenoff clown until last week, but now I know who he is, and I must commend him for providing a couple minutes of disturbing entertainment and plenty of fuel for conversation whenever we boxing writers tired of talking about Pacquiao and Marquez. In case you haven’t seen it yet, here’s the video that lit up YouTube last week: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GKuiQobQi0>

. I’ve never rooted so hard for a Mayweather.

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