

How Pacquiao's Different From Past Crossover Boxing Superstars

Written by Frank Lotierzo

Thursday, 24 February 2011 12:09



Last week Manny Pacquiao went to New York City and visited the Daily News, and then traveled to Washington D.C. to meet President Obama at the White house. These stops are in part due to the promotion of his upcoming welterweight title bout with former three division champ Shane Mosley. Like Muhammad Ali, Sugar Ray Leonard, Mike Tyson and Oscar De La Hoya, Pacquiao has become a superstar and major presence on the world stage and once again, a pugilist has taken America by storm. Pacquiao's fights are events and more than just boxing fans look forward to watching him fight. Which also was the case with Ali, Leonard, Tyson and De La Hoya.

However, if you think about it, Pacquiao is different than the other fighters mentioned above in this sense. In reality, the only thing Manny shares with Ali, Leonard, Tyson and De La Hoya (Oscar is a tier lower than Ali, Tyson, Leonard and Pacquiao as being a natural fighter) is that he can flat out fight and is truly a once in a generation talent/fighter. If you think about it, outside of the ring Manny is very nice and somewhat boring. He's to the letter when it comes to political correctness, and that was years before he became a Philippine congressman. And in a thousand interviews you'd be hard pressed to find something he's said negative about anyone.

As much as he's routinely disparaged by Floyd Mayweather in the media, he responds by saying he prays for Mayweather to get his life together. Could anyone imagine Ali or Tyson having Mayweather dog them in the press like Floyd has Manny, and them responding like Pacquiao recently has? Not in a million years. Both Muhammad and Mike would've retorted and gone deeper into the gutter than Mayweather could ever imagine. As for Leonard and De La Hoya, they'd respond in some condescending manner and act as if they're above dignifying Floyd's antics with an acknowledgment. Yet Manny says he's praying for Floyd.

Another major contrast is Pacquiao is the only one who wasn't groomed to be a superstar from the moment he turned pro. All the fighters I mentioned were essentially stars before they'd even proven themselves. Pacquiao had been a great fighter for many years before he became a superstar. And looks also played a part in the fame behind Ali, Leonard and De La Hoya. It's no coincidence that all three of them had leading man good looks. Tyson, who was promoted as an animal, more like King Kong than as a human being, didn't need those kinds of looks. But would De La Hoya have been a star if he'd looked like Bernard Hopkins? These fighters were superstars partially because crossover boxing is show business, and they all had the faces to allow for the crossover.

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For the last couple years promoter Bob Arum has been saying that Pacquiao is as big as Ali, Leonard, Tyson and De La Hoya when it comes to being an international superstar, (he's not at Ali or Tyson's level yet). But Arum promotes Manny and maybe he was lying yesterday and is telling the truth today. Then again maybe this time Arum really is telling the truth. Whatever you think about what Arum says, there's no denying that Pacquiao is currently as big as Peyton Manning, LeBron James and Tiger Woods in regards to being a superstar throughout the world.

If you compare Pacquiao to Ali, he's at a disadvantage. Ali was a the fastest and flashiest flashy heavyweight in history who became a member of the Nation of Islam, then refused to fight in the Vietnam war. He was out of boxing 43 months and made a successful comeback. Ali stirred the pot on race, politics, religion, and free speech. Tyson was a man-child who was promoted as the biggest life-taker since George Foreman, whose life outside the ring came apart once he became undisputed heavyweight champ. Ray Leonard was an Olympic hero who adopted the moniker "Sugar" from Ray Robinson and then took on Muhammad Ali's trainer Angelo Dundee, and his early fights were broadcast by Howard Cosell, another vein that traces back to Ali. Oscar De La Hoya was an Olympic star like Sugar Ray Leonard and was promoted as being the kid next door. And like Leonard, Oscar was managed and promoted by corporate millionaires on the way up.

Another difference between Pacquiao and the fighters mentioned above is, 90% of the fans who watch him fight are rooting for him to win. Whereas when Ali and Tyson fought, half the people watching wanted them to win and the other half wanted them to lose. And the same applied to Leonard and De La Hoya, who were perceived by many as being the beneficiaries of marketing and television executives who saw to it that they got every benefit of the doubt on the scorecards when they fought. Most likely the only people who watch Pacquiao fight that are rooting against him are die hard fans of Floyd Mayweather.

Other than being a great fighter, Pacquiao really doesn't have much in common with Ali, Leonard and Tyson, aside that his fists speak loudly in the ring. And it says something about the way Pacquiao's popularity has exploded being that he's not an American and was fighting as a featherweight when he first showed up on HBO. On paper, Pacquiao's popularity might be hard to translate into US standards, in that he's small (Americans are obsessed with heavyweights), he speaks English as a second language (Duran could get away with that because he had a persona that made him larger than life), and because, culturally speaking, US fans like their heros to trash talk a little bit, but there are cultures where modesty and piousness are actually bankable. Bear in mind that, for the Philippine people, Manny presents a very good image to the rest of the world, so there's every reason why they should love him.

Boxing fans in America are drawn to this Philippine fighter who speaks fondly of his opponents before and after the fight, and at the same time manages to provide thrilling and exciting bouts every time out, even on the nights that his opponents are not good enough to really push and challenge him. They also love that he genuinely wants to prove he's the best and winning really means something to him. Add to that that he's a clean liver and stays out of trouble, there's nothing not to like about him.

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[Comment on this article](#)

FighterforJC says:

What the..??? When did Frank Lotierzo get taken off Mayweather's payroll??? LOL.

Great article, I agree the most with:

[!]Another major contrast is Pacquiao is the only one who wasn't groomed to be a superstar from the moment he turned pro. All the fighters I mentioned were essentially stars before they'd even proven themselves. Pacquiao had been a great fighter for many years before he became a superstar. [/!]

I think that right there is the biggest difference. I think in that sense, De La Hoya and Pacquiao are polar opposites. i've always said and will say so till the day I die or until DLH pays me off a couple of million dollars, that De La Hoya is the epitomy of paper champ.

astro says:

He may be as big as Peyton Manning, but, he's no Tom Brady. LOL

Radam G says:

Yall already know what tyme it is. P-TIME, Babbbbeeeeeee! Now let me go and read what da masterweaver -- F-Lo --of pugilism script. Everybodeeee and dey mommas are now tryin' to get caught up in Da Mannyweb. They want get bit by BIG MOOLA, not a spider. Few were concerned about him when he was deb. But now they are drinking out of his fame like it is applecider. Holla!

Radam G says:

No psycho-analyzing comments on this F-Lo's piece from me. No fault of his own, but the world is much bigger than the U.S. American audience. Da Manny is more well known than GOAT Ali and Tyson put together. The precentage of the world is Asians, and while many U.S. Amerkanos didn't spot Da Manny's fire for a long time, Latin Americans, Middle Easterners, Euroasians, Afroasians and Asians did. See, 90 percent of us Filipinos are mutts -- hip hop slanguage for people who are mixed with several races and ethnicites -- and Aspanic, so most peeps of the world and Hispanics welcome us as cousins -- at a minimum. Not one percent of the close to 3.7-billion Asians on that continent have ever heard of Peyton Manning. He plays the neighborhood football -- not the world one -- you guys call it sockers. Dubai, Singapore, Qatar, China and even countries in Europe have tried to get Da Manny in those country to fight. Nobody from those areas are calling Manning. Lebron James is known because of the great

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love that Asians have for basketball, but Kobe Bryant is BIGGER in Asia and the Middle East.

When GOAT Ali was going through his trials and tribulations, the world population was 4.5-billion peeps, and mass communication, as it is today, was nowhere around. The world population now is almost 8-billion peeps and 7-bill are in tune to cyberspace. Da Manny is indeed most popular and BIGGER worldwide than the GOAT Ali was. Iron Mike was popular in the States, in Europe and in the Metropopulations of Asia, Africa, South America and Australia. In the province and countryside, nobody and dey mommas knew Tyson. Too bad when it comes to Sugar Ray Leonard and Oscar "Big Money O" De la Hoya. They were not known in the provinces and countrysides of Africa, the Middle East, Australia or Latin America.

Most peeps in the world are closer to the size of Da Manny, not Fatties and Tallies of that sorry-arse division called Heavyweight. WiliLEAKS even reports the fame and the name of THC PacMan. North Africa and the Middle East are falling because of WiliLeaks and there cable that Ben Ali, Mubarak and Qadhafi all spoke of da Manny in the last six months. Oops! Also Money May got luv from these falling knuckleheads. Everybody knows Da Manny. And Ninety-five percent of black boxers and seventy-five of their audience do not cheer for Da Manny to win. Half of them honestly believe that THC Manny is on "A-side Meth." Holla!

nashingun says:

it truly is as this article stated, pacquiao came as a nobody yesterday but now he took floyds seats and proved himself to the world he is the deserving gentlemen sportsman of our time. pacquiao not only conquered the sports but politics and entertainment as well. pacquiao's achievements climbs further than anyone in this sport. he's achieve an eight weight division title more than anyone can imagine! he's done it in a decisive manner beating the biggest man he can find and beat them to the pulp. too bad pacquiao is just human and has limitations that he need not push himself further to middleweight. a possible fight with martinez could have been exciting but he knew middleweight is too much for him. yet pacquiao still wanted to go on fighting compared to floyd jr's decision to step out of the ring as long as pacquiao is active fighting. for the most fighters like chavez jr everyone is brewing to be the next superstar is obvious yet someone like donaire is taking same footsteps pacquiao took 5 years ago... i bet, we will see other pacquiao like superstars in the near future, if not now it will be in the future.

Coxs Corner says:

Pacman is the goods but in reference to the comment about being more popular than Ali is not true. At the peak of his popularity Ali was the most recognizable man on the planet, in part because he was/is muslim.

brownsugar says:

FigherforJC,... You are totally wrong about Flo Lo,.. over the last several years no writer on this site has been as Anti-Mayweather as Frank.. his past stories have set up marvelous debates because of his obvious bias against the amazing fighter from Michigan..

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brownsugar says:

Cox is correct. no fighter or Athlete who has ever lived past or present has been impacted the entire Globe with as much Universal appeal as Muhammad Ali.. his allegiance to the Muslim religion gave him access to a greater audience than the world has ever seen... and for those who don't know their international politics,.. there is a huge Muslim population in the Phillipines(remember the Muslim revolt in the 70's?) and many other Asian countries as well.... Pac's great for the sport and I hope he can continue create interest in boxing... if his ties to politics can help improve human rights in his own country then that's an extra added bonus for his people.

brownsugar says:

oh,.. did I say that Manny takes a good haircut?

#1 PacFan says:

Manny Pacquiao has shook the boxing world by storm. He's a storm that destroyed everything in its path. If you say Pacquiao in a store many will say, "who is he fighting next?" Or they'll say, "has he fought Mayweather yet?" His name is as big as Michael Jordan and if you get caught asking who Pacquiao was they will laugh at you. That's how big his name is out here in Cali.

Radam G says:

The truth shall set you FREE! Or stuck in dat self-installed mudhole forever ya will be. Wow! Being there -- on ya -- people can caca and peepee. Then they will keep you in an optical illusions by tellin' ya dat it is hailing and raining. And believing dat ya will continue failing and never gaining. Like me school ya! I wouldn't fool ya! I be fly ta ya, before I lie ta ya! Besides, you can check it out for yourself. Just take the step to get rid of that prosophobia and phronemophobia. And maybe that fever of epistemophobia. It is a lot of legit info that one can google or just by hollering at the very popular Youtube.

During the era of Sugar Ray Leonard, he was American and European LARGE. But in the larger whole, wide world, Aaron Pryor and Bruce Curry Fiji were BIGGER. [That's RIGHT! I posted it! Bruce Curry were LARGER in Asia than da Sugarman Leonard.] Asians luv people of their ethnicity and seek 'em out. FYI Pryor and Curry are part Japanese and were known and televised in most of Asia, while Sugar Ray Leonard, Marvelous Marvin Hagler and Tommy "Hitman" Hearns were only known in the Asian BIG cities, but not in the hitherlands of the provinces, countrysides, jungles, boatdwellers and mountains.

I don't know what it is! But haters continuously think of Asia as a backward, behind technology continent. We have been ahead of the typical American for decades. Besides every single electronic product in the stores of American was made in Asia, except about 90 percent of the bootlegged ones that are manufactured by street criminals on the blocks on the U.S. mainland. [In our Asiatic nations, the abled had updated technology before the American norm. And a whole lot of the POOR -- lucky or in the know -- were provided laptops by foundations of Bill

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Gates and other American and world billionaires as early as 25 years ago. Some people say that they did it because of tax write offs, but who cares. Knowledge is a powerful GIFT and a key to enlightenment.]

Everybody and dey mommas in 90 percent of the Philippines have access to iphones and computers. The literacy rate is also a whopping 90 percent. Higher than on the mean streets of the USA, where your Secretary of Education says that 75 percent of Americans graduate from high school functionally illiterate. But they luv to hyper-exaggerate the 10 percent in the Philippines. I'm not inflamming or insulting anybody. I'm just stating info that anyone can find and get. PacMan was deprived of education as a youth, but he went to get it as an adult and millionaire. Not many American boxers, footballers or basketballers do that. And for the record. The most popular American footballers in da world are Troy Polamalu and Hines Wards. They do mean business with endorsements in all of Asia, especially South Korea -- where Wards's mother is from -- and in Japan, Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan and China.

My last bit of spit: Filipino former light welterweight world title belt holder, Morris East Jr was for a minute bigger than Big Money Oscar and Mike Tyson in the larger world. The world has CHANGE. Amerkanos really need to expand their horizons. "There days when U.S. America would sneeze and the rest of the world would catch a cold," -- so she believed are -- no more. Yall need to TRAVEL. IF you cannot do it in the live space, holla at WiliLEAKS, or ride your learning ships through cyberspace. You really need to stop learning at such a slow pace. This way, people can come outta da illusion dat GOAT Ali or any boxer was more popular than Da Manny.

Ali had no internet audience until the very last year of his rumbling. Since the population of Muslims have grown, and there are more Muslims in Asia than anywhere on the Planet, just numbers indicate to one Da Manny is MUCH BETTER KNOWN than ALI. Da Manny is the most recognizable human being in real space, television space, PPV space and cyberspace. [Holla at the rating of the television show 60-Minutes. Da Manny kicked Da GOAT Ali's arse. The show haven't called Money May.] Da Manny has even been made a Datu in the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia. Not only that, he resides and was born and bred in Mindanao Muslim Autonomous Regional of the Philippines. REAL boxing fans of the world cares little about a person's religious belief. World featherweight title holder Chris John, a Christian, resides in the largest Muslim nation -- Indonesia -- on the planet. Ninety-nine percent of every Indonesian Muslims at his fights there cheer against every single Muslims from any where that challenges him. Since Da Manny lives in Mindanao and don't eat pork, nutcases have already said that he is secretly a Muslim. I can see these haters and faders saying that Da Manny and Prez Obama were in the White House making secret prayers. Hehehehehehe! WDDF! FYI, Pops Joy May and Uncle Roger have said that Da Manny is a Muslim. But the media won't bite. And they shouldn't! Especially when these reporters of lies claim that Pinoys have a powerful steroid that is known as A-side Meth, and causes bullets to bounce off us. Holla!

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Great post Radam. [QUOTE=Radam G;3286]The truth shall set you FREE! Or stuck in dat self-installed mudhole forever ya will be. Wow! Being there -- on ya -- people can caca and

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Radam G says:

Thanks, #1 PacFan! I'm just trying to get people to use that wrinkle fat inside of those noggins. And let them know what TIME it is. P-TIME! No pun intended. But a whole lot of faders and busters need to come out of their mudholes of self isolation and conveniently not knowing the WHOLE TRUTH and not knowing how to count the world population of GOAT Ali's days and now Da Manny's era. There are 80 to 100-something-year-old people in Asia, Africa, The Middle East and Communist East Europe, who are living nowadays and didn't hear of or knew GOAT Ali during the 1960s, 70s, 80s and 90s. Many have just learned of GOAT Ali in this 21-Century era of Daily Motion and Youtube. Maybe a lot of the readers here don't know how isolated the world is/was without cyberspace/internet. Seventy and eighty-year-old Somali Africans in San Diego, Cali, have never heard of and didn't know that GOAT Ali boxed in Zaire, African in 1974. Some of them don't know GOAT Ali today. But they know THC PacMan by face and that he boxed in the Cowboys' Palace near Dallas, Tex. in 2010.

In 90 percent of the countrysides and provinces of Asia, Africa, South and Central America, people didn't have electricity or ham radios during GOAT Ali days. The world was LOCAL Base. It is now GLOBAL Base. [Call the telephone operator from your U.S. telephone, and she may be from any Asian country giving you info about a stateside phone number. Whenever I'm in the States -- like now -- I can call the telephone operator and one of my relatives in Manila will pick up and be given me a stateside phone number request.] Anything that happens on earth can be known by 98 percent of the earthlings in seconds now. During the days of GOAT Ali, most of the people in the Filipino province that Manny was born in didn't know that an American GOAT Ali fought in Manila. For goodness sake, Tawi-Tawi province of the Philippines and in provinces of Malaysia and Indonesia, a lot of people just find out about the Thrilla in Manila in 1995, and that jive happen in 1975 when I -- the toddler Radam -- was still peepeeing on myself and 80 percent of the champs who were brave enough to let me sit on their laps, Imfao! When Da Manny kayos Sugar Shane Mosley, 99 percent of the world which wanna know will know in a delay time of 20 seconds, not 20 years and an increase of the world's population by 4 billion. Holla!

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Robert Curtis says:

They say the definition of insanity is to do the same thing again and again and expect a different result. Well, I drove out to Highland, California to watch James Toney fight with the hopes of seeing a trimmer Toney getting a swift, early knockout over "Dangerous" Damon Reed. Instead I got the usual, clinically-obese Toney waddling his way through a glorified sparring session. I knew the night would be a dud the moment I watched James make his entrance. He had an ample green and white robe that fit him like a muu-muu borrowed from Mo'Nique. When Toney took the robe off, he was big as a house, maybe the fattest I'd ever seen him. He had the athletic build of Curly Stogee. Toney's trunks would make a good tent for a den of cub scouts if you waterproofed them and had some aluminum poles to prop them up. I learned later that Toney had weighed in the day before AT 257 POUNDS! Damon Reed was in fair shape, but you could see that he wasn't a natural heavyweight. Reed looked like a small man beside the bloated Toney, kind of like Ricky Hatton's grandpa. At 216, Reed looked husky, short-armed and every one of his 39 years. 42 year old Toney's arms and upper body were much thicker than Reed's, but not enough to distract from the massive gut and love handles jutting out beneath. The first four rounds were lifeless. Toney finally did break a sweat in round three. Why, I have no idea. All Toney did was circle and poke at Reed. We in the audience were bored and restless, but the beer helped. At the end of round five, there was one snappy exchange that made you hope that JT might soon live up to his "Lights Out" nickname. Alas, it was not to be. Two Ton Toney cruised and snoozed his way to a one-sided victory over a journeyman cruiserweight. Damon Reed wasn't half as game as he talked himself up before the fight. This moonlighting restaurant owner was about as tough as a half-empty can of corned beef hash. Reed kept complaining to the referee about Toney's roughhouse tactics, which didn't amount to much more than the occasional slap on the back of his head, and maybe an imaginary low blow. There was more drama out in the audience. San Manuel's Indian Police ejected one rowdy drag queen and escorted a few shouting drunks out of the arena. On the flipside, there was one great undercard bout between Angel Estrada and Alfredo Rivera, two truly tough and game junior welterweights. Angel had a huge posse in the audience wearing T-shirts bearing his name. But all their love couldn't stop a determined Alfredo Rivera from winning a gutsy, aggressive victory over Angel. Neither Angel or Alfredo were particularly good prospects. I do not see brilliant careers in their futures. But they were in shape and totally determined to win. Their four action-packed rounds were worth the price of admission. When it was done, they brought the audience to their feet for a standing ovation. Alfredo did a full backflip before the announcer proclaimed his victory. This was Alfredo's first win after seven straight losses. Despite my disappointment with Haystacks Toney, I'm glad I drove out to see this night of live boxing. Good seats came easy with this silly card. I know I'll never get that close to Manny Pacquiao, not with my cash flow. A friend of mine is bringing me a Manny T-shirt back from Manilla though, size XL. It won't fit Toney, but it might fit me.

Robert Curtis says:

Sometimes, as a boxing fan, I wish I had some Pacific Islander in me, so I could imagine some strong blood relation between me and one of the greatest fighters of all time: Manny. Muhammad Ali has about the same amount of Irish ancestry that I have, whatever that means or doesn't mean. Race, creed, gender, sexual and identity politics separate us more than they

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unite us. In these hard economic times, we should focus on what unites us. Workers work. Not sure what the latest Nova special on PBS says about our human origins, but I doubt it has strayed far from the idea that all human life originated in Africa. We are all members of one another.

Radam G says:

Hey, Bobby C, you'll be aight. Just get a bit of tuba -- Filipino homemade coconut wine -- in ya. And you will be JUST fine. But me, I am now gettin' off da wine. I'm a whimp and double dat when I have my buzz on. My wife kicked my drunk butt the other day for the wrong wording and thinking about her twin sister. The twin is an old maid anyway. Thirty-two years old and never married or touch. Maybe ya boy James Toney should get back on the coconut juice. I remember a few years ago when he was sippin da tuba, da puba, da muba and every darn thing else-ba [sic]. He would forget that see-food diet that he is on nowadays. That's RIGHT! SEE food diet! He eat every darn food that he sees, hehehehehe! Holla!

Real Talk says:

De La Hoya epitome of paper champ?!?! WTF?!?! R U serious??? U only disrespecting a HOF boxer who fought damn near every top boxer in the last 20 years in every class he was in. Chavez, Sweet Pea, Gatti, Quartey, Mosley twice, Trinidad, Floyd, Hopkins and Pacquiao to name a few. Who did I forget? And no he didn't win'em all, some he got gifts in my opinion, some he got robbed, but he rumbled like a soldier. Oscar had maybe the best chin in boxing as well as the meanest jab in boxing and a lot of heart. Give that man his due respect he deserves cuzzo. Dueces

FighterforJC says:

[B]@De La Hoya's fishnet stocking provider:[/B] De La Hoya made a career out of fighting TWO types of fighters with extremely rare exceptions:

1. Those who were or were perceived to be past their prime and ripe for the taking
2. Those who had to move up several weightclasses to fight him.

I give him full credit for Ike Quartey and I give him partial credit for Trinidad, against whom De La Hoya stunk up the joint and ruined his reputation for the rest of his career. I could care less if he won them all or not, the fact is he's a manufactured champ who on his way fought blown up flyweights when he himself could've easily been fighting at jr. welter from the very beginning. He avoided Vernon Forrest and Winky Wright and fought everyone else at the most opportune moments. Sure those are only two names, but that's usually all it takes for a great fighter to be remembered. It's like Ali avoiding Foreman and Frazier.