

Showtime Crew Assesses Pacquiao-Mosley

Written by The Sweet Science
Thursday, 28 April 2011 21:49

SHOWTIME Sports® held a media conference call on Thursday to announce the SHOWTIME PPV® telecast announce team for the upcoming marquee boxing event featuring global superstar and Philippine Congressman Manny Pacquiao and three-division world champion “Sugar” Shane Mosley on Saturday, May 7.

James Brown, the host of the popular weekly series Inside The NFL on SHOWTIME and THE NFL TODAY on CBS, will quarterback the May 7 SHOWTIME PPV four-fight telecast. The last boxing event he worked was between Shane Mosley and Fernando Vargas in 2006. An enthusiastic mainstay on CBS and SHOWTIME, Gus Johnson will call all the action from ringside. Al Bernstein, a well-respected boxing historian who has called more than 2,500 fights during his 30 years behind the ringside microphone, will provide the fight analysis alongside Antonio Tarver, a former undisputed light heavyweight world champion who has taken to his television role as “third man in the booth.” The Emmy® Award-winning Jim Gray will serve as the back-stage, ringside and in-ring reporter for the event. (See attached document for more bio information on each announcer).

Pacquiao (52-3-2, 38 KOs), of General Santos City, Philippines, will defend his World Boxing Organization (WBO) welterweight title against Mosley (46-6-1, 39 KOs), of Pomona, Calif., in the main event at the sold-out MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas. Promoted by Top Rank, in association with MP Promotions, Sugar Shane Mosley Promotions, Tecate and MGM Grand, Pacquiao vs. Mosley will be produced and distributed live by SHOWTIME PPV®.

Closed circuit tickets, priced at \$50, are on sale and available at all Las Vegas MGM Resorts properties.

The Pacquiao vs. Mosley pay-per-view telecast, beginning at 9 p.m. ET/6 p.m. PT, has a suggested retail price of \$54.95, will be produced and distributed by SHOWTIME PPV®. The telecast will be available in HD-TV for those viewers who can receive HD. For Pacquiao vs. Mosley fight week updates, log on to www.sports.SHO.com or www.toprank.com.

Highlights of what the participants had to say on Thursday:

KEN HERSHMAN, Executive Vice President and GM of Sports Programming at Showtime: “We think we’ve assembled the best announce team in all of sports for this event. SHOWTIME started in boxing 25 years ago and since then we’ve evolved and grown and are now covering five different sports. But boxing continues to be the rock and the foundation of SHOWTIME Sports and we are very proud of our history.

“As far as pay-per-view goes we have five of the top 10 most watched pay-per-view events of all time and we think that Pacquiao-Mosley will become number six. The promotion for May 7 is really humming along. We haven’t even seen the whole breadth of what is coming over the next few days and next week. We are bringing a broader promotional aspect to this event than ever

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seen before, especially with the help of our sister network CBS.”

JAMES BROWN:

“I am thrilled to be back in the boxing arena both figuratively and literally. I am just so thankful that Ken Hershman has drafted me to come back and host this and clearly to be accepted by the regular team anchored by Gus and Al and Antonio and, of course, Jim Gray, all of whom I have worked with over the years - that’s a good thing as far as the camaraderie to be associated with this fight.

“To me, of all the sports I’ve been blessed to cover there is nothing like a championship fight with the energy in the arena and to also be seeing one of the all-time greats in Manny Pacquiao. I’m just really looking forward to this.

Shane has already mentioned another fight with Mayweather and a possible rematch with Manny. How much longer do you think Shane Mosley can continue fighting?

Tarver: “As long as Shane can get in there and protect himself and show what’s he’s capable of doing then you know the sky’s the limit. If he sees in his heart that he can beat Pacquiao and would want to fight him again, that just shows that he still has the passion and still has the confidence in himself. As long as he can do it physically, God bless him. That’s my take on him.”

What challenges does he face in his late 30s than he had in his 20s?

Tarver: “Well, when we were younger we could do this in our sleep. There was really no competition when we were amateurs and we were both the best. Now it’s a business and you’ve got guys like Pacquiao and Mayweather on top. So now he has to climb those extra steps to solidify himself as the best. He has a great opportunity.”

Al, tell us a little bit about the WBO super bantamweight title fight on the undercard between Jorge Arce and Wilfredo Vazquez Jr.

Bernstein: “Obviously there has been a lot made recently of the fact that boxing has to do a better job on the undercards of these major events so that the casual boxing fan that comes can really see other great fights. Not just the main event. And I think this card will accomplish that. One of these fights is Arce-Vazquez. For the uninitiated, Wilfredo Vazquez’s father was a great, great world champion and he’s following in his footsteps. Jorge Arce was a former flyweight champion who is jumping up in weight to fight for the WBO super bantamweight title. The thing that makes this compelling, and I think more than anything is the part that people want to see on these pay-per-views, is that both these fighters will engage much like Pacquiao-Mosley will in a real shootout. Jorge Arce only has problems when he fights boxers who have hand speed and movement and all the rest. When they’re in front of him he makes for exciting and excellent fights. Fifty-six times he’s won so he’s a terrific fighter. What this fight also is about is Wilfredo Vazquez Jr. stepping up to center stage and seeing how he performs. He’s already won a championship but at 26 he could be in a general weight division with guys like Juan Manuel Lopez, Gamboa and the others, to maybe step up as a real star. So we’ll watch and see if he does.”

Gus, What is the difference in calling boxing play-by-play as opposed to the NFL or basketball

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or some of the others sports you've covered?

Johnson: "What makes boxing so special as compared to those others sports is the intimacy in the arena. It's like we're all connected more than the others. Certainly a college basketball game or an NFL game with 70,000 fans you feel that but with boxing the focus is on just two guys instead of 10. The two guys are in there and at the top of their game and taking risks. Everybody knows it and everybody can see it and feel it. And that's what makes boxing so special; the anticipation and not only the anticipation but of the actual moment coming together for these two men who are in the ring. There's nothing like a championship fight like James Brown said. As far as Pacquiao-Mosley, I've got to pinch myself to realize that I'm working this fight. I have a lot of friends and people who come up to me and say, 'Hey, are you going to watch the Pacquiao-Mosley fight?' I have to chuckle and say, 'No, I'm not going to only watch it, but I'm going to call it.' So I'm just so happy to be a part of this event."

Jim, what do you expect to hear from the fighters just an hour before they go on?

Gray: "Well, we'll have to see how things develop during fight week and at the weigh-in and to see the Fight Camp 360s and be able to determine from there. I think age is going to be a factor. Mosley is going to be a 40-year-old man in September and he's 9-6-1 over the past 10 years. So I think people want to know: Could age be a factor? He's been in 12 rounds fights five of his last six fights so he's obviously been in good shape later on in his career. As for Manny, I think the big thing is expectations. I mean, ask Tiger Woods or Michael Jordan about expectations. Everybody always expects you to win and that's a very difficult place to start from. So those are some things I think we'll touch on and I think we'll know a little bit more as the week goes on."

How have the ratings been on CBS and SHOWTIME for Fight Camp 360°:

Hershman: "We've been working hard for a long time to make SHOWTIME boxing and SHOWTIME Sports the best that we can possibly make it and we think that we've put on some of the best boxing events of all time. Pay-per-view has never really been the primary objective. Pay-per-view has been an opportunity for us to make sure we continue to deliver to our subscribers the best boxing on television. But fighters of the caliber of Manny Pacquiao and Shane Mosley are not fighting on premium television, they are fighting on pay-per-view. So we are thrilled to move them over here for what we think will be the biggest boxing event in years. Through the synergies between CBS and SHOWTIME we feel we can promote and market this event like no one else can and that's an important factor for us. We have what we feel is the biggest franchise there is in mixed martial arts with Fedor Emelianenko. Despite his two losses he remains a superstar and his ratings on SHOWTIME prove it. We have the best NFL show. We have the best NASCAR show on television by far and we have this new Major League Baseball show that we're launching with the world champion San Francisco Giants. So Manny fits perfectly into that whole formula. He is the biggest name in boxing and he transcends the sport."

"To talk about Fight Camp 360°; it's been well received by the critics and more importantly well received by the people who watch it. It's not a fabricated or staged environment. It's really what you see is what happens in the day-to-day lives of the fighters and their families and their camps. The ratings have been good. We expect them to grow as the episodes appear more over these next eight days. We're in the process of assembling all the viewership data. We've

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aired it everywhere: on CBS, on SHOWTIME, on the web so we haven't collected all that data yet, but we will and we'll have some better answers for you. But so far the ratings have been strong and we expect them to get better."

Is there anything Mosley can do that could result in an upset?

Bernstein: "As you know, boxing is all about the styles. And he and Floyd Mayweather in the younger days would have matched up better but Mosley as an older fighter had his moments with him because he did hurt him very badly in that one round. But Floyd Mayweather is a defensive genius and he was able to continue on in that fight and make it a one-sided fight. The difference is in the styles of the two fighters. Manny Pacquiao, while he has reinvented himself into being one of the best boxer-punchers in the sports in years, he still attacks. He will get hit with right hands from time to time. And Shane Mosley makes the case that Antonio Margarito landed more punches in the last fight than anyone else has in the last three or four years. And his point is that if Antonio Margarito can land those punches, I have better hand speed. And at 39 he probably does have better hand speed. His feeling is that he can still land punches and make them count. I think we're going to find out about this fight over the first five or six rounds because Shane Mosley is going to land a solid right hand. And we're going to see if it impacts Pacquiao. We haven't seen Shane Mosley for awhile be really effective with his left hook, which is a hugely powerful punch. I think that's the secret weapon or secret surprise that he and his trainer Nazim (Richardson) are working on. Everybody expects the right hand to land. I think that Shane Mosley is going to surprise us in his strategy and try to land all these left hooks to the body and to the head. I think they believe Pacquiao is not expecting that. Whether or not he's successful at it or not remains to be seen. Either way this should be an action fight because of Pacquiao's style."

Antonio, you've seemed to really come into your own with your job as an announcer. Where do you see yourself taking it in the future?

Tarver: "When I look at this broadcast team I think of the camaraderie and this teamwork. It's just made it really comfortable for me to work with such pros who are at the top of their game. I can't say enough about how guys like Gus Johnson and Al Bernstein and Jim Gray and Steve Farhood have made this such an easy transition into what I'm doing and trying to find my niche. The preparation is the key. To work hard and really want to work at it to be the best that I can be. I don't want to bring these guys down so I really try and work hard and be as good I can be. But these guys have really welcomed me with open arms and have made it somewhat of an easy transition."

Do you think Pacquiao has remained the best fighter in the world over the past three years?

Bernstein: "I think Nazim said it best recently. Floyd Mayweather is the most talented in the world today and Manny Pacquiao is the best fighter in the world. I'll go with that statement. Clearly, you can't take anything away from Floyd Mayweather as a skilled boxer. He is just superb. He does just about everything right. But Manny Pacquiao has performed more. I've never seen a fighter reinvent himself like Manny Pacquiao. To me that's an extraordinary thing. I have to say at this juncture it's Pacquiao one and Mayweather two in the polls. That doesn't mean Pacquiao would beat Mayweather in the ring. That's a whole different debate entirely. It just means that because Pacquiao has been a little bit more active and a little bit more consistent and has fought just about every conceivable fight, I have to vote for Pacquiao."

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Do you have to put Pacquiao among the all-time greats in boxing? □ Gray: "Having won eight titles I think you have to. It's been remarkable what the guy been able to do. He's fought everyone that's been in front of him. Let's see what happens down the road with Mayweather but the answer to that question is yes. Just go back and look at all these fights and see how he's done it and I think you have put him right up there in that sentence. You could argue a lot of people but he would be in that argument."

Johnson: "I think Mayweather and Mosley's styles are very different. I think the great thing about Pacquiao, as Al and Jim have stated so eloquently, I think Manny has fought everyone and he's always been able to adjust. I think that at 39 Shane Mosley is going to bring his best. I think he's going to come out sharp and he's going to be really prepared. He does have great hand speed and if he can pull the trigger like he did when he fought Margarito, then this could be something to really see. To me, Floyd Mayweather and Manny Pacquiao getting into the ring, that's a whole different mention. It's something that we all obviously want to see and it's something that has the potential to be a fight of the century type thing. So I wouldn't necessarily compare Floyd and Shane but I think individually we're going to see a great fight from Shane with Manny and if it ever happens with Floyd and Manny."

How hard was it to put this all together with CBS?

Hershman: "Oh, like way hard (laughter). I think the interesting thing about CBS, to be serious, is that a lot of companies talk synergy and they buy all these assets and they talk about how they're going to work great together and then they all internally fight with each other and nobody ends up doing anything. And I've been part of those organizations. But the real uniqueness with CBS is that when we presented this opportunity there wasn't a push-back or resistance. It was really more excitement and encouragement and them saying, 'OK, what can we do?' We actually had to scale back some of the things their divisions wanted to do because we just weren't ready to get there yet. But we will in the future. The company just works together really well and they get it and the priorities were met and exceeded and I couldn't be more pleased. I wish I could sit here and say it was some monumental task that I was able to pull off and that we overcame but to be honest it really wasn't. It was quite well received and handled really, really well and we're excited to see it all come to fruition on May 7 and I think it's going to be all pretty impressive."

Antonio, what advice would you give Mosley?

Tarver: "I think he just has to stay mentally focused. He has to fight smarter and not harder. He's not going to be able to just sit there and match Pacquiao power for power. He's going to have to set some traps and hopefully he walks into them. I think he definitely has the boxing IQ to do that. And I think that's what makes this fight so intriguing. I'm looking for a heck of a fight on May 7."

"I think Mosley is coming in with a lot of confidence that he was able to knock out a guy (Margarito) that Pacquiao was unable to stop. I think Margarito also got some really good shots in on Pacquiao. I think the one punch that Pacquiao gets hurt with and which (Joshua) Clottey used very well was that uppercut. I think that Mosley is going to have to throw that a lot - and often and in close. I think that is the only avenue that they cannot protect is up the middle."

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Do you think Pacquiao can be the first one to knock out Mosley?

Bernstein: "I think he wants to. Freddie Roach has talked about it a lot. That's the marketing goal here. When I interviewed Freddie at Wild Card he made it a big point in saying that if he knocked out Shane Mosley it ratchets up the marketing for Floyd Mayweather to come and fight them and in some fashion it makes that fight even more feasible. So I think they want to do that and will try and do that, but it's not going to be an easy task. And I don't think they will consciously go after it but I think it's in the backs of their minds and they would like to do it. But if he does do it I think it will be because of the volume of punches."

What about all the distractions Manny has going on in his life?

Bernstein: "I've never seen a guy compartmentalize life better than Manny Pacquiao. I mean, it's actually staggering. When you're around him there seems to be a stoicism that envelopes him. When you think about this announce team, we all have many different projects and things that we do and different people we answer to. When you think about Manny, he holds an elected office position, he's a champion boxer, a singer, he's been in movies in the Philippines and all his humanitarian works and somehow he seems to center himself for these fights. And I think it's amazing how both he and Freddie have said that this is the best training camp they've ever had."

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FightersforJC says:

A couple of things. First, Mosley's reasoning is way off when he says he's going to hit Pacquiao more than Margarito did. As I've pointed out before, the main reason Margarito was able to hit Pacquiao as many times as he did was because of Margarito's schin and volume punching. Margarito walked through Pacquiao's best shots and was able to land his own shots. I think Marg threw over 700 punches against Pacquiao, which I believe is the most punches any opponent has ever thrown against Pacquiao since he moved up from lightweight. Marg's offense was the equivalent of the Americans breaching Normandy. They just fell like flies as the Germans opened fire, but through sheer numbers and relentlessness, the Americans eventually broke through. Mosley doesn't have that. He's not all of a sudden going to throw 70 punches per round and he's certainly not going to dare walk through Pacquiao's best shots. Mosley's there to land the lucky, sneaky punch that Pacquiao doesn't see and hope that it would be enough to topple Pacquiao. Mosley's not looking to win rounds, he's going to wrestle and play dirty to throw Pacquiao off his game. Mosley is not going to control Pacquiao with sound boxing. There's no way.

Also, I think if anybody's coming into the fight with overconfidence it's Mosley, not Pacquiao. It seems like Mosley's camp more than anything, about trying to get his confidence up, which is why they continue to watch older Pacquiao fights at the lower weights, where Pac, weight drained by 20lbs, seemed more human.

Radam G says:

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Sugar Shane is going to get schooled and fooled. Holla!

Radam G says:

I have to bite off the words of Uncle Roger May: "More people don't S*** about boxing" or Filipinos. Distractions going on my arse. We Pinoys have to be doing multi things or we will get bored. Anybody who has been around Filipinos know that we are the more energized and always-on-the-move people on da planet. We are not loners, or like hanging out in small crowds. The larger the crowds, the more comfort -- not distractions. The energized bunny has nothing on us. If Sugar Shane could keep the bout interesting, he could stay around for a sec. But he is going to make Da Manny bored with all that shaking, rattling and trembling. So Da Manny is going to knock him da fudge out in three to six rounds. But don't be surprised to see Sugar Shane caught and hurt early with multi-body punches.

Da Manny could sneak attack the Sugarman and get him outta there in a round or two. People can keep serving hope gum all that they want to. Just keep chewing that jive. Give yourself a high five. It will make you feel better and alive. But you are going still shock of lacking Sugar Shane can take the Pac-Power, especially the bodyshots. [I expect for the nonsense of steroids and illegal PEDs to roar up BIG TIME after this arse thrashing dat Da Manny is gonna put on da Sweet Tea -- I mean Sugarman. Holla!

FighterforJC says:

You beat me to it. I was going to say the same thing, that Pacquiao might devastate Mosley so badly that haters from all over will start crying "PED!!!"