Written by Frank Lotierzo
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It's been a little over a week since WBC welterweight title-holder Floyd Mayweather 42-0 (26) stopped former title-holder Victor Ortiz 29-3-2 (22) at the end of the fourth round. And from the moment Mayweather dropped and stopped Ortiz with a perfectly placed left-hook and right cross to the chin, there's been much written about Joe Cortez's ineptness as a referee and Mayweather's unsportsmanlike behavior during the bout.

Let's get Cortez out of the way first - yes, he clearly was out of position and did a horrible job governing the fight at the end. But that had no effect on the result, that blame goes to Victor Ortiz. Did Victor really think he could try to headbutt Mayweather and then try to make friends with him and perhaps suck him into falling for his own bending of the rules conduct later in the fight? As we saw Ortiz learned the hard way because Mayweather was too experienced and smart to be bettered by Ortiz at that game.

It's been agonizing hearing and reading the cookbook analyst banter back and forth saying what Mayweather should've done or what they would've done in that situation. As most know this

column has not treaded lightly when it comes to objective criticism and critique of Floyd Mayweather the fighter. But I can't, nor should anyone else yell fire when there isn't a whiff of smoke in the air just so they can jump on Mayweather because they don't like him.

During the past week it's been written a thousand times how the first thing fighters are taught when they go into the gym is "protect yourself at all time." Yeah, in a perfect world that sounds great, but it's not true, simply because a fighter coming into the gym for the first time is so far away from fighting that it's not even a thought. That aside, it is repeated by the referee before all fights in the dressing room and at ring center before the start of the bout. Actually, it's the last thing a fighter hears before the bout. However, that doesn't matter for this discussion because the focal point is more centered around whether or not Mayweather did anything wrong or illegal - to which the answer is, no!

Some have referred to the left-hook and right hand that Mayweather stopped Ortiz with as a sucker punch. But only if you allow yourself to get suckered. More importantly it was also legal and many past all-time greats would've done exactly the same thing Floyd did in that spot. The object in fighting is to win, and that means by whatever it takes to do so within the rules. If a fighter gets a free shot at his opponent and the opponent is too distracted to protect himself from being so vulnerable, you better believe nine out of ten times he's getting clocked. In a fight there are many unknowns and if a shrewd fighter like Mayweather can end it before he gets cut or head-butted a second time, you better believe he's going to take his shot and go home with the win. Once Ortiz touched Mayweather's gloves after Cortez deducted a point from him for his attempted head-butt, it was on and shame on Ortiz for being a dope. Could you see Mayweather being caught like that if the situation were reversed? Not in a million years would Mayweather leave himself at the mercy of his opponent.

Professional fighting isn't war, but it's also not about making friends or giving an opponent a break once the bell rings. If fighter A could hit fighter B low three times a round and not be disqualified or penalized, you better believe he would, with his thought being it'll take something out of his opponent and give him an edge later in the fight. Some of those reading this are probably huge fans of Sugar Ray Robinson, Roberto Duran, Sugar Ray Leonard, Marvin Hagler, Bernard Hopkins, Michael Spinks, Jack Dempsey, Sonny Liston, Joe Frazier, Larry Holmes, Mike Tyson, Evander Holyfield and Lennox Lewis. So I ask, how many fighters did they ever give a break to? And could you really see them not doing the same thing Mayweather did in the same situation? I can't. Every fighter mentioned did whatever they could to incapacitate their opponent as fast as they could within the rules so they could get out of the ring uninjured and with the "W". They just weren't as lucky as Mayweather was in as far as having an opponent in front of them in a big fight who left themself so wide open to get whacked so cleanly the way Victor Ortiz did.

When world class fighters get in the ring, so much is riding on the outcome and it's so dangerous and hard to win at that level, it's takes a rare breed of man who won't seize on every opening his opponent gives him. Knowing the way Floyd Mayweather approaches boxing and with so much riding on the outcome when he fights, how could he not nail Ortiz with two clean finishing punches after Ortiz tried to head-butt him? Once Victor tried to butt him during the fight, Floyd became a little fearful because that never happened to him before. It made him view

Ortiz in a completely different way and he then realized that Victor was going to do whatever it took in order to give him his first defeat.

Personally, I believe even if Ortiz hadn't tried to butt Mayweather, Floyd still would've cut loose with the left-hook right hand combo that he knocked him out with in that spot. However, once Victor escalated his presence during the fight, if there was a chance that Mayweather was going to let him off the hook, that was gone. And that's because Floyd Mayweather is a real fighter and doesn't have any dog in him. When he's in the ring he's all about winning, and if you scare him or try to intimidate him, he won't try and make friends with you, instead he'll try to legally cut your throat, something that shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone who has followed his career.

At the end of the day, Mayweather scored an impressive knockout and lives on to fight another day for millions of dollars, regardless of who the opponent is. Sure, there's plenty to rip Mayweather the fighter about. Obviously he's picked his spots and hasn't met the best available opposition when they were there to fight him and at or near their prime. His insistence on making Manny Pacquiao submit to Olympic style drug testing before they fight is just a ruse and a means to gain an edge in the ring on fight night. Floyd's been an even greater manager in some aspects than he is a fighter. So there's plenty that Floyd Mayweather the fighter/boxer can be called on, but his conduct during his bout with Victor Ortiz last week shouldn't be on the list. He won the fight fair and within the rules and in a manner that many past idols and greats would've.

Many of the beloved greats from the past weren't altar boys in the ring when they fought and neither is Floyd Mayweather. The fact that he was brazen enough to take the free shots that Ortiz gave him showed me a little something more about his character as a fighter. Remember, there was some risk in doing that. What if Ortiz didn't blink and turned to him after the right hand crashed against his jaw and said, "now what Floyd"? However, that thought never crossed Mayweather's mind because he was intent on getting Ortiz out of there and would've just hit him again.

Professional fighters don't win by being nice guys and making friends with their opponents in the ring. Unfortunately for Victor Ortiz, he thought by buddying up to Mayweather he could con Floyd into not embarrassing him later on during the fight. And to Mayweather's credit, he saw right through that subterfuge and put him away the first chance he got, legally and justifiably. Just as Sugar Ray Leonard, Roberto Duran and countless other all-time greats would've done.

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Comment on this article

Coxs Corner says:

Well they aren't in their to dance. Harry Greb was perhaps the greatest middleweight ever and was considered a dirty fighter. Dempsey hit Sharkey low when he turned to ref to complain

about a low blow, legal knockout. Holyfield was a billy goat against Tyson. Tyson hit Tony Tucker on the break. It's boxing. I don't like Mayweather cause he has a carefully handpicked career, but I have no complaints about what he did in this fight.

Radam G says:

Nice one, Arch-Master scribe F-Lo. Maybe some of these readers understand you better than they do me. Every fighter fights and take any advantage that is given to him. He ain't a dang referee, or doing refereeing. Money May was not at fault, nor was Vicious Victor. They are like fighting cocks who must be regulated. Any miss stepping is because of a darn faulty referee. Cortez oughta take responsibility for his failure. "Protect yourself at all times" is just a way that the powers that be are punking out. Cortez shoulda stayed between the combatants and never turned to eyeball the timekeeper. I think Joe is gettin' long in da tooth and need to retire just like my Uncle Carlos Padilla did when he started fudging up. He is now in his palace in the P-Islands watching and enjoying the fights. Maybe Cortez should retire and go to the P-Islands in the Caribbean. Holla!

brownsugar says:

Can't believe the most notorious Floyd hatin' boxingwriter on the site gave the aging vet some props...even thought some of the compliments were issued left-handedly it's still a pretty accurate about how real fighters cannot,.. will not pass up an opportunity.. In Chess if you pass up taking your opponents pawn because you feel that your 3200 rating gives you the ability to beat his 2900 rating even if your down a point....and your feeing magnanimus,..Loosing that single pawn early in the game can be just enough edge to allow you oponent to defeat you as the game wears on..

My favorite ruthless boxers are Duran and Hagler... you hardly wanted to approach those guys outside of the ring,,..... leading up to a fight, because they exuded so much menace.

Tommy Hearns gave his opponents a grim reaper glare that took the heart out of some his challengers.

I think they should limit friendly glove taps to only 1 or 2 per fight to eliminate the excuses of the guys who really do it as form of pleading for mercy.

FighterforJC says:

Answer to the article:

No they wouldn't have.

michaelabii says:

Great article and on point. I mentioned in a prior article that Sugar Ray Leonard frequently would punch right on the break when his opponent was least expecting it. The difference is that

Mayweather caught Ortiz clean and knocked him out. Lennox Lewis had Michael Grants head pushed down with his elbow and then delivered a crushing uppercut to end thier heavyweight title match in dramatic fashion. Bernard Hopkins said he would have done the same. I differ with the writer on one point; Boxing is war ! Every fighter has to have a warriors mentality which includes a killer instinct to strike when your opponent is vulnerable. "Sportsmanship" ends once you have touched gloves and even that is not entirely neccessary once the ref says time in. We have to differentiate between judging Mayweather as a fighter and as a person. He is who he is as a person and I for one will only judge him on legal standards and not on anyones percieved standards of sportsmanship. Now, I did notice a decline in Floyd. For one he is a tad slower which by his standards is remarkable and will probably not be noticed much. I do think he is compensating for that with more power. He hurt Ortiz with a right hand in the 3rd. His timing was a bit off but this may have been due to inactivity. I also think it now takes longer for him to warm up in fights and I wonder what would happen if someone jumped right on him from the get go ?? Any thoughts ??

michaelabii says:

[QUOTE=brownsugar;9658]Can't believe the most notorious Floyd hatin' boxingwriter on the site gave the aging vet some props...even thought some of the compliments were issued left-handedly it's still a pretty accurate about how real fighters cannot,.. will not pass up an opportunity.. In Chess if you pass up taking your opponents pawn because you feel that your 3200 rating gives you the ability to beat his 2900 rating even if your down a point....and your feeing magnanimus,..Loosing that single pawn early in the game can be just enough edge to allow you oponent to defeat you as the game wears on..

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I know some trainers who absolutely order thier fighters not to touch gloves once its fight time. Leave that for friendly sparring. Once its fight time for professionals its war. Both guys are looking to take each others head off !

brownsugar says:

fightmaster michaellabi,.... I've seen Jack Lowe get very upset whenever Pavlik did it.. gave him a full lecture in the corner.

JaketheSnake says:

This is actually a consistent attitude on Mayweather's part. I remember seeing the mid-rounds

of the Mosley part and Mosley was trying to touch gloves in the middle of the round. Floyd , an old-school fighter who does not do that, reluctantly touched up once. Then Sugar Shane tried to do it again, Floyd gave him a full speed straight and tried to knock his head off! He saw that Mosley was trying to shave off some time and maybe earn some mercy, and Floyd would have none of it.

amayseng says:

Either way it is a cheap way to win a fight.

It's a punk move for the fact that he premeditated it

And set it up.

It's one thing for a pitcher to throw a ball over the plate

when a batter is just stepping into the box.

It's another to throw one at his head when he's just stepping

in and not looKing waiting for the umpire to put "time in" and

give the go ahead to the pitcher.

FighterforJC says:

The whole irony of it, with Mayweather's crusade to clean up boxing for the safety of all. But he has no problem teeing off on someone who is not protecting himself, which could've easily resulted in a career-ending injury to the brain.

amayseng says:

Agreed.

How many times has Floyd said he wants an even playing field???

Knocking a guy out when he's stepping back from a sportsman like

huh which he faked to put Ortiz in an unsafe position of

defending himself is not an even playing field.

FighterforJC says:

[QUOTE=amayseng;9704]Agreed.

How many times has Floyd said he wants an even playing field???

Knocking a guy out when he's stepping back from a sportsman like

hug which he faked to put Ortiz in an unsafe position of

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Exactly. Most writers choose to not mention the fact that Mayweather feigned the embrace to set Ortiz up. Of course, if you're Mayweather's kind, you'd call the "smart" and some would even call it "masterful." Give me a break. If it's truly "kill or be killed" in the ring, Floyd shouldn't be going on his quest to get rid of steroid use. The man is a hypocrite and a coward.

Radam G says:

FJC is right. But Money May's propaganda will always be a long way from his actuality and reality. Honesty in the seedy sports of boxing is very, very small. In da game, Money May is an admitted thug, but he will give one a hug, then on dat a$$ get on his pug. My take on this; never, never fully trust a person who's willing to put da beat down on one's a$$, especially for a large pay. Because fair dat sucka ain't gonna ever play. Holla!

brownsugar says:

Radam knows what's at stake..

the Roast says:

"Sportsman like hug" This is boxing. We do not hug and kiss the other fighter. And you Fighter4JC, how can you know what was in Mayweather's head. Sound familar? You just hate Floyd Mayweather. Plain and simple. Dont tell me I'm a Mayweather minion. I have bashed Floyd and given Floyd credit on a case by case basis. I dont root for any fighter. I root for the fight itself. For boxing. I hope every fight is great. Every fight I sit down to watch, I hope is Corrales-Castillo. You sir, are a hater. I'd like to slap you with a white glove and duel at dawn.

FighterforJC says:

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LOL you mean how could I pretend to not see how obvious Mayweather's "feint" was? LOL.

Regardless of my opinion of Mayweather, the fact is he's a hypocrite who is afraid of Manny Pacquiao. He's not willing to fight him in the ring so he starts the whole anti-steroid nonsense for the safety of everyone in the sport and to level the playing field, but he has no problem punching a defenseless opponent who could've been seriously injured by a full power punch on his relaxed, unprotected jaw. Not only does it reveal Floyd's hypocrisy, it also reveals that he KNEW BEYOND A DOUBT that the ONLY way he would've survived Ortiz that night is if he went for that cheap shot. 'Nuff said.

the Roast says:

Thats a huge reach ever for you F4JC. He knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that would be the only way he would survive the great Victor Ortiz. That part. I will agree that Floyd sucks if he doesnt get in the ring with Pac this spring and give the fans that damn superfight. For the money and for the history.

FighterforJC says:

I guarantee you, if Pacquiao looks mortal against Marquez (and I'm hoping he would), Floyd would play the role of knight in shining armor and drop all the ridiculous demands "for the sake of the fans," and agree to fight Pacquiao.

Radam G says:

@amayseng, an even playing field for Money May is BUNK! Da man is a master of trickery in and out of dat squared jungle. Trickery starts way before you get into that boxing ring. Key point is Money May said that he "want a fair playing field." But he will tell you in a New York minute that "Da f*uckin' boksin' ring ain't no field. Yall f*uckers must think I'm playing football, baseball or soccer or some syet....B*tch, ya' don't play boksin." Besides, da BIG moola showoff says constantly that da game is "crooked, dirty and _____. The Money May optical illusions are in effect 24/7. By the way, he said he originated that show. It is his creation, so he claims. Holla!