

Pacquiao and Marquez Bonded By Rivalry, PED Accusations

Written by Ron Borges

Friday, 11 November 2011 09:05



On the subject of performance enhancing drugs at least, Manny Pacquiao doesn't believe what goes around should come around.

Pacquiao is on the opposite side of the steroids debate this week but has found it no more comfortable to see his Saturday night opponent, Juan Manuel Marquez, being questioned about his possible use of PEDs than it was to be the subject of such accusations from Floyd Mayweather, Jr., the rapper 50 Cent and other members of Mayweather's entourage over the past two years.

There is no more evidence that Marquez has used PEDs to prepare for the final fight of their trilogy at the MGM Grand Garden Arena than there was that Pacquiao used artificial means to successfully jump from 106 pounds to his present 147 while retaining both his power and his speed but the issue was raised after it recently came to light that Marquez hired a strength and conditioning coach, Angel Hernandez, with a checkered past.

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Hernandez was once known as Angel Heredia but apparently was never an angel with either sobriquet. A physical trainer by trade, Hernandez while still Heredia admitted to delivering illegal steroids to disgraced track coach Trevor Graham and to an involvement with BALCO, the now defunct supplements company run by Victor Conte that was in the middle of the steroid scandal that exposed baseball's decade-long home run explosion of the late 1990s as having been artificially fueled.

Marquez has packed on added and obvious muscle in order to compete with Pacquiao at 144 pounds because even at 38 years old his normal fighting weight remains what it has been for years, which is to say between 130 and 135 pounds. The added muscle, coupled with Hernandez's sudden appearance for the first time in the Marquez camp, naturally resulted in speculation that the two were chemically bonded.

When Pacquiao's trainer Freddie Roach was apprised of those charges this week after they were first leveled by, of all people, Conte, even though they were not directed at his fighter his normally affable demeanor quickly darkened. Certainly PEDs have begun to appear in boxing, as they have in all sports, and in fact several fighters based at Roach's gym in Hollywood have tested positive for them in recent years.

Yet Roach strenuously maintained this week both that muscle is overrated in boxing and that raising questions about fighters like Marquez and Pacquiao are unfounded and unfair.

"I'm so tired of that b-----t," Roach said of the suggestion Marquez is a tainted warrior. "You work hard with a fighter. You make him get in shape and he's got to be doing something funny. I'm tired of it.

"We've had it done to us. I've certainly had it done to my gym (the Wild Card). I don't want to do it to them."

Neither does bombastic promoter Bob Arum, who has vehemently defended Pacquiao's reluctance to agree to random blood testing right up to the fight to secure a match with Mayweather, pointing out that Pacquiao has never tested positive for anything in his 17-year boxing career and that a powerful fighter with vast box office appeal like Mayweather should not be determining what fighters are and are not tested for.

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Oddly, this week he has found himself defending Pacquiao's opponent rather than Pacquiao himself of similar guilt by innuendo and association, a process that began after Conte first spied Hernandez in Marquez's camp during one episode of HBO's 24/7 pre-fight reality mini-series and went public with the suggestion the man who once fed steroids to disgraced Olympians Marion Jones and Tim Montgomery was now in the lightweight champion's corner as he prepared to fight a bigger man for the welterweight title.

"I think it would behoove all of the press to stop dealing in generalities," Arum said. "First of all, the way I run an operation, the fighter can hire anyone he wants as a trainer and a conditioner. For a period of time, people like Victor Conte and this guy Hernandez dealt in steroids with major athletes but that's old news in this sense: most of the intelligent people can see that when (Conte) was handling (Nonito) Donaire and this guy who is now with Márquez know that you can achieve all of the benefits that you used to achieve with steroids with natural supplements without any risk of illegality or without any dangers that steroids caused, like steroid rage and other long-term problems.

"If Conte and this guy (Hernandez) were dealing with steroids with anybody, to me, it makes no sense because they have been through the legal system in the U.S. – Conte was in jail and this guy apparently testified and got a suspended sentence and the last thing they would do is deal in illegal substances (again).

"You don't have to do that anymore. Wake up and see what these conditioners are saying. They are using natural and totally legal supplements and using state of the art conditioning methods not because of anything other than the fact there have been advancements in the legal methods (to prepare for optimum performance by an athlete). The steroid problem is fading into the past."

Bob Arum will be 80 years old next month and is probably not the most knowledgeable spokesman for the passage of PEDs into the sporting past but the larger point is unless and until boxing adopts more stringent testing these kind of charges will continue to be made when a fighter moves up significantly in weight without an apparent loss of speed or power.

For the moment, at least, Roach continues to argue that whatever muscle Juan Manuel Marquez has added – regardless of who it got there – will be of no significant assistance

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Saturday night except, perhaps, to absorb more punishment.

"Muscle doesn't help you counterpunch (which has long been Marquez's forte) or help your speed," Roach insisted. "If he feels stronger and feels he wants to exchange with Manny that's good for us. I would have worked the other way.

"I know Marquez can hurt Manny. He's done it several times (in their first two fights). I like Marquez better as a counter puncher. That's a science of its own. I don't see muscle helping a counter puncher."

If it does on Saturday night however you can bet someone will be suggesting it did.

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FighterforJC says:

[I]"There is no more evidence that Marquez has used PEDs to prepare for the final fight of their trilogy at the MGM Grand Garden Arena than there was that Pacquiao used artificial means to successfully [B]jump from 106 pounds to his present 147 [B]while retaining both his power and his speed"[/I]

Ron Whoreges at his best. I challenge that punk to a fight to the death. I will behead him and put it on YouTube for everyone to enjoy.

I stopped reading after that paragraph. Seriously? Pacquiao "jumped" from 106 to 147? Ron, if you're reading this, accept my challenge. I will kill you. It's not going to be a fair fight. I will bash your skull in. HOLLER!

mortcola says:

The sentence says "there is no more evidence that Marquez....than Pacquiao...". It does not really imply that Pac or Marq took PEDs. As for public death threats....dude, you need help, before help comes looking for you.

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BULL. First off, the guy training Marquez has a HISTORY with PED's. That gives Marquez TIES to possible PED usage. Where is Pacquiao's PED affiliations? Second, the change in Marquez's physique is dramatic enough for everyone to notice. Pacquiao's isn't, especially if you watched the HBO broadcast of Pacquiao-DLH where HBO did a before and after of Pacquiao's body, noting no significant differences. Lastly, as a perfect example of irresponsible and incompetent journalism, Whoreges states that Pacquiao JUMPED from 106 to 147. Plain interpretation of that is that Pacquiao weighed 106 in his previous fight and became 147 in his next one. It is a misleading statement, deliberately so, because Whoreges is so desperate that he had to resort to lies.