Written by Ron Borges
Monday, 14 November 2011 19:56

LAS VEGAS - Bob Arum barely survived what took place inside the ring at the MGM Grand Garden Arena Saturday night. So, too, did Manny Pacquiao. That both did was a reflection on the security staff at the MGM and the presence of three ringside judges who will never be nominated for the Supreme Court.

After Glenn Trowbridge and Dave Moretti concluded Pacquiao had defeated his arch nemesis, Juan Manuel Marquez, and Robert Hoyle saw it as no better than a second draw in three meetings between them, the sold out crowd of 16,383 began to boo lustily, reaching a crescendo that drowned out Pacquiao's post-fight words until he finally left the ring with a sad look of embarrassment on on his face.

By then the nearly 80-year-old Arum had scurried away to the post-fight press conference but not without the crowd taking out their mounting frustration on the man who controls Pacquiao's career and had already begun talking about making a fourth fight between the two next May.

"That's the first time something like that ever happened to me,'' Arum said after the majority decision was announced. "All the Mexican fans were booing me. They were yelling, 'You stole the fight! You stole the fight!' as if I had something to do with it. You can laugh but they wanted to lynch me. I have to go back to Mexico to promote fights.''

If he wants to make a fourth fight between them, Arum may have to take it to Mexico to convince the frustrated Marquez to go through another eight to 10 weeks of the arduous training he endures to prepare himself for Pacquiao after now having lost a disputed split decision, a disputed draw and now a highly disputed majority decision.

"If the fighters are willing, the promoter is willing,'' Arum said. "Not only was this fight not definite, very few rounds were definitive.''

That depends on who you asked. For the majority of the packed house at the MGM they were quite definitive and many ringside observers felt the same way, the majority leaning toward Marquez by anywhere from a slight margin to the same 8-4 split Trowbridge had it but in the opposite direction.

Even Pacquiao's most loyal liege, trainer Freddie Roach, admitted he had no idea who won the fight when it ended and though he would be just as happy never to see his fighter in the ring with Marquez again, he feels he has little choice in the matter now.

“It was a competitive fight,’’ Roach said. “It could have gone either way. It’s the kind of fight I don’t want to do again but we have to. This one might have been the closest (of the three). If we didn’t win the last round it might have been a draw or gone the other way.

“S--t. He’s given us problems three times. I do think he deserves a rematch. Yes, I do.’’

Whether Marquez wants it might be the larger issue. Though speaking more from competitive disappointment than rational business sense shortly after his defeat, Marquez said he would go home and talk seriously with his family about retirement for the first time.

“Honestly, it is the result of this fight that make me think of retiring,’’ Marquez (52-6-1, 39 KO) said. “I prepared so hard. I just wanted the judges to score the fight the way it is happening. “I really believe I have to drop him to win but if I do they will pick him back up and give him the fight. I’m frustrated right now. Very frustrated.’’

Arum was dismissive of Marquez’s talk of retirement, insisting probably quite rightly that those were more the words of immediate disappointment than a rational discourse on his future. What did not seem rational was Pacquiao’s later claim that “It was close but it was very clear I won. It’s part of the game.’’

Certainly disputed decisions have long been a part of boxing but three of them against the same guy seems more than a bit unlikely, just as unlikely as Marquez sticking to his retirement plan after his expected $9 million in guarantees and pay-per-view upside roll in.

While he may have three reasons to consider stepping away from boxing, Juan Manuel Marquez will end up with millions of reasons to press on if an immediate rematch for the WBO welterweight title is ordered at the same catch weight of 144 pounds that applied in this fight.

If that happens, it will assure that the fight boxing fans most want to see – a showdown between Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather, Jr., a younger, faster and more defensively skilled version of the 38-year-old Marquez - will be delayed to at best next November. Although Marquez's performance Saturday night certainly earned him the right to another shot at Pacquiao, the fact of that seems to make it more unlikely the 34-year-old Mayweather and soon to be 33-year-old Pacquiao will ever give boxing what it wants most.

If they don't, blame it on Juan Manuel Marquez's skills and three pencil-wielding judges' failing eyesight.

PS: Then comes word that Team Mayweather seemingly really and truly wants Pacquiao on May 5. But Arum is not inclined to pursue that fight next for Manny. If true, I would say this is the typical business of boxing. Certainly Juan Manuel Marquez has earned the right at another shot at Manny Pacquiao but how does it benefit the SPORT to make such an announcement? It does not. So what's the point? It would be to inflame the situation and make it even more difficult to make THE fight because what was apparent Saturday night and each time Manny fights Marquez is that Mayweather will pose a very difficult challenge for him. A challenge Bob Arum may not be up to.

Comment on this article

jacubi50 says:

Borges you're delusional. You need to rewatch the fight and fess up what you really scored. Unbelievable. These boxing writers and journalists are completely morons.

rey1979 says:

juan manuel marquez not deserve the forth fight bcoz he play a fouls and many dirty tactics...look at the replay..watch the foot of jmm he do that many times.....
i dont know pacquiao alowed that to hapen....or it is a (bait)for the future fight..i mean the mega super fight betwen pacquiao vs mayweather...will happen coz team mayweather saw that fight

jacubi50 says:

Manny has never been booed this bad ever. Forget all the press giving Marquez the edge. Wouldn't it be proper and righteous to give Marquez a rematch immediately. Manny said he won. The judges gave Manny the nod. Everyone else gave him fits. Amir Khan called it for Marquez on Primetime. He later rewatched it and give it to Manny by 1 or 2 rounds. He also called for Manny to retire after the fight. Look at all these negativity. Manny is only doing the right thing if he gives Marquez a rematch. He needs to redeem his shattered reputation. Forget Floyd. Floyd had 3 chances to fight with Manny in which he turned down. The only thing that came out of Floyd's mouth is "take the test." Granted he called out Manny to fight him on May 5th, but these things are typically done behind closed doors between promoters. It's now going to appear that Manny is avoiding Floyd and Arum is the old fart he is. As for Arum, I believe he can make the Manny/Floyd fight happen, but he can be playing games too just to get back at them for playing games with him in the first place. I absolutely do not want to see a Manny/JuanMa fight again, but Manny's reputation is on the line. His reputation was severly damaged over the weekend by everyone calling the fight for Marquez swayed by emotions of an overwhelming mexican crowd, all the oos and aas everytime Marquez threw a punch. The most troubling of all is how Manny walked back to his corner with his head held down at the end of the fight. This is a gesture of disappointment that he didn't KO Marquez, not one of defeat. His bar was set exceedingly higher than Marquez that no KO equals failure. However, this made a lasting impression on all fans, boxing experts/writers/pundits, and boxers that Manny lost. Manny my friend, that was your fault!

FighterforJC says:

How's Pacquiao's reputation "damaged?" It's not his fault the judges gave him the fight. And how is it "irrational" for Pacquiao to say he clearly won? He's in the ring and he knows how he feels. He's admitted in the past that the first two fights could've gone either way, but obviously he felt more sure of himself after this fight. People mistake Pacquiao's disappointment for an admission of defeat. Pac was clearly not pleased with the outcome for a couple of reasons. #1, he didn't get the stoppage many were hoping for and #2, he wasn't able to provide the type of fight that boxing fans were expecting. Both camps promised lots of fireworks, only Pacquiao delivered on that promise.

jacubi50 says:

Dude you are misinterpreting my comments. His reputation is "damaged" cause everyone is villifying him like he's a thief, that he stole the fight from Marquez. You, I, and Manny know he won the fight "clearly" (7-5) but it was a close fight, no doubt about that. The entire Mexico is cursing out Manny. All negativities are directed towards him. I was on Manny's facebook yesterday, do yo know how many people was calling him a rat and all kinds of stupid stuff. If you don't call that damaged reputation, what is? He won the fight for godsake. Also, I said it was Manny's fault because he shouldn't have held his head low as he was walking back to his corner. He gave people a reason to say he lost. He did this in the Shane Mosley fight too, but it's because he felt his performance was not stellar and not that he was defeated.

mortcola says:

In one respect, Frank is right: a savvy, straight punching quick counterpuncher with good anticipation has the best possible style to beat Pac. Mayweather is at least even money to beat Pac, and I've said this all along. However, the writers reminding us not to try those triangle explanations are right: styles definitely make fights. Marquez has the absolute scientific blueprint for making Pac look ordinary. Just not for punching often or decisively enough to actually win. But there is another consideration. I don't think Pac is slipping physically. His reflexes were fine, he was in great shape. But, writing as a professional observer of motivation and mentality, I think Pac is not only distracted by his quadruple life of saviour, celebrity-singer, politician, and fighter, I think he is no longer comfortable with the persona of "attacker". There was something half-hearted and not particularly hungry in his demeanor in the ring the other night, apart from the frustration that Marquez' intelligent countering caused him. I think Manny is not a hungry fighter anymore, and wants no more than to give a good show, without undue violence. He showed mercy to Mosley and Margarito, and hesitated a great deal against JMM even when not particularly troubled by JMM's responses. I think Manny has transcended the poor hungry fighter, and as a result will not be as effective any more unless it gets through to him in a desperate, motivating way, that his legacy has been built on both his viciousness and his decent humility. Without the viciousness, he'd better just focus on politics. Against Mayweather, he better have every bit of slum-child hunger he can find, cause tearing chunks of meat like the skilled Tasmanian devil he is at his best is the way he wins that fight.

plee12 says:

Hey Ron Borges, since when is it such an outrage when the aggressive champ gets the nod in a very close fight? And maybe Pac gets the benefit of the doubt in each fight because he is hyper aggressive in close competitive bouts. Nacho & Marquez should quit whining. I would've said the same to Pac/Roach if they lost Saturday. It was that close!

And I love how these "expert" writers and floyd fans are now predicting that PBF will annihilate Pac. That's not how boxing works folks. Not all counterpunchers are made the same. Marquez is fairly aggressive counterpuncher while Floyd sits back and waits for openings. Plus Marquez had fought Pac 2x prior to saturday. He was mentally ready to deal with Pac's speed and footwork. PBF may get caught off guard. You just don't know.

Do i still give a slight edge to PBF if he and Pac meet? yeah probably. But Saturday's fight doesnt tell you that much more about PBF's chances against Pac. You can theorize all you want (e.g., most folks were predicting that Marquez would get knocked out Saturday) but you gotta fight the fights. I remember most folks were fearing for Holyfield's safety when he fought Tyson the first time. Holyfield took it to Tyson and put him on his a$$.

So borges, not sure how you didnt pick this up in all your years covering boxing but just because figher A beat fighter B and fighter B beat fighter C that doesn't necessarily mean that figher A will beat fighter C. Didn't they teach that in boxing coverage 101?

Terryl says:

I agree, Marquez deserves a fourth fight. Although he said he's considering retirement, he has

at least ten million reasons to sign on the dotted line.

jrs says:

I think that pac boy should not say that he won he should say the truth i lost the fight. Its not pac boy fault that the judges gave him the fight but say the truth he looks dum saying he won.

jacubi50 says:

JRS don't be ridiculous. Manny won a close decision. He's not going to say he lost when he won. On the other hand, Marquez needs to stop saying he won because he really lost. We all know this was a close fight. Marquez could have won if he fought a little harder, or agressive, down the stretch. If he had done that, I would've given him the nod. If team Marquez really think they won, have them file an official complaint to overturn the decision and suspend the judges. The case for Williams vs Lara was successful--3 judges suspended. Also, why is everyone villifying the judges, not from comments made here but everywhere else I've came across. These 3 judges are a handful of top judges, unlike the judges for the Williams vs Lara fight. Team Marquez also claims that it was a conspiracy by HBO and the judges trying to maintain Manny's cash cow status. How ridiculous is that. Marquez says it is not right to challenge the decision of the judges, but he cried foul so vociferously why not put a case together. People just to stop bashing the judges. Judges don't favor Mexicans or Filipinos. Also, why all the bashing of Harold Lederman as well. He saw what he saw and he gave it to Manny. Again, in the Williams vs Lara Lederman had Lara winning by a wide margin, but the judges gave it to Williams. As you all know, the judges were wrong by far and were rightly suspended. So if Marquez really think that he won, file a complaint.

FighterforJC says:

Watched the fight only for the second time. My conclusion is that it was a boring, unsatisfying fight regardless of who you were rooting for. I thought that 5 rounds were clear enough to o to JMM and 5 were clear enough to go to Pac, with 2 that could've gone either way. There's not much to cheer for if you're a Pacquiao fan and not much more to cheer for if you're a JMM fan other than the fact that he managed to stay on his feet this time.

TerryIgnacio says:

Marquez had a perfect game plan in the sense that he nullified Pacquiao's advantages. Unfortunately, it wasn't enough for the judges to score in his favor. A challenger who's a counterpuncher has to prove that he is superior to the champion to get the W. Even then, the decision is certainly controversial, and Marquez definitely deserves a fourth fight.

dino da vinci says:

@jacubi50. 1. Welcome. You appear to bring both passion and insight. You'll be a good fit. However, tone down the name calling. It's not necessary. 2. Are you aware that JMM was the winner of nine different rounds on at least one of the three judges scorecards?

TerryIgnacio says:

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Sorry, I meant Pacquiao Marquez [B]4[/B]:

If I were a betting man, I would incline towards voting for a Pacquiao Marquez 4 happening before Pacman Mayweather.

But we fans should let our voices be heard, let the promoters of both sides know that we want to see Pacquiao vs Mayweather.

jacubi50 says:

I think you are partially right with the "attacker" persona. In this fight, however, I believe Manny wanted to show his improvements against Marquez. I saw a tense and hesitant Manny, not because a lack of an attacker persona, but the embarrasment that would result in making a mistake allowing Marquez to counter freely. Manny wanted to avoid the same dilema that haunted him in his previous 2 fights. Manny tried to be careful but he still got countered causing more hesitation and frustration. The harder Manny tried, the tighter he became and started to look one dimensional. He resorted back to the 1-2 punch combination with a straight left down the middle that he knew best. I think Manny had so much pressure to knockout Marquez that he lost track of the game plan. He went back to the comfort of the 1-2 combo because it was successful in knocking down Marquez in the past. I think the pressure of the press and boxing fans did him in this time. Although Manny was favored to win, I thought he was fighting with a chip on his shoulder. If Manny went in and had an all out brawl like he did in the previous two fights, he would have knocked out Marquez. But because the brawl may look similar to the previous two fights, Manny may see it as a failure and not an improvement. I think the improvement Manny wanted to show is that he can control the fight, the pace of the fight, and when the time comes knockout his opponent. Obviously, he made it harder on himself when it didn't come to fruition. So if there's a 4th fight, Manny let it all go. No pressure!

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jacubi50 says:

Dino Da Vinci. Yes, I know that. All 3 judges gave Manny 1, 3, 6 rounds, and Marquez got 4, 5, and 7. But here's the thing, two judges gave 3 of the so called UNCLEAR rounds, 7, 8, and 9 decisively to Manny. Only rounds 2, 10, and 11 were a little wishy washy either way by the judges. So if you gave JMM rounds 2, 10, and 11 instead of Manny, than there's a draw. As a boxing fan and spectator who watched the fight intently, and rewatched it multiple times afterward, I gave JMM round 2 decisively, unlike the judges. In round 11, I thought Manny was winning the entire round until nearing the end of round when JMM landed a clean counter, but nevertheless Manny won 2+ minutes of that round. Manny landed more and the cleaner punches in that round. So the judge that gave round 11 9-10 to JMM probably saw that ending clean counter punch, but again Manny was winning the entire round. As for the 12th round, again Manny was the agressor, moving forward, and throwing cleaner punches/jabs. JMM tried

to fight back but was missing wildly. I gave round 12 decisively to Manny. So the judge Trowbridge that gave this round to JMM instead MP probably didn't appreciate Manny's mouth piece falling out his mouth. Trowbridge probably thought Manny needed a breather and hence lost the round. But statistics wise and as the agressor, Manny clearly won the 12th. At the end, I scored it 115-113 MP, but I could have given Manny 116-112, like Trowbridge and Lederman. As I was scoring, I tried to give JMM the benefit of the doubt. There are 2 rounds I could have given to Manny but instead I gave it to Marquez.

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amilesqmarleya7103 says:

And I have faced it. We can communicate on this theme.

amilesqmarleya7103 says:

I confirm. It was and with me.