

FLOYD MAYWEATHER PRESSER

Written by Ron Borges
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Floyd Mayweather, Jr. is the biggest money maker in boxing because he figured out a long time ago that the key to that kind of success is not about popularity alone.

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It's about skills to be sure, which Mayweather has in abundance, but it is also about the inverse of popularity. It is about just as many people wanting to see you lose as wanting to see you win because in the end the only thing that really matters is that they want to see you period. Why isn't really part of Mayweather's business model.

"When I go into an arena, if they're cheering, then it's a great thing," Mayweather said during an international media conference call to hype his fight next week with WBA junior middleweight champion Miguel Cotto at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.

"If the fans boo, that's a great thing too because they're letting me know I'm relevant, that they know who I am," he added. "If they didn't make noise, then I'd have a problem with that. When they boo, or cheer - they know who I am. I'm relevant and at one point in their life, they paid attention to me. It's a good thing."

It's been so good that Mayweather has become the highest grossing fighter in boxing, a pay-per-view sales producer like no other. Richard Schaefer, CEO of Golden Boy Promotions whose company is serving as the front man in this promotion, is predicting Mayweather-Cotto will do bigger business than Mayweather did with GBP owner Oscar De La Hoya, which was a record night in which an estimated 2.2 million buys were achieved.

Topping that next week seems difficult to believe but not for Mayweather, who when it comes to boxing and sales sees only the sky as his limit. He is, he knows, a fighter who needs no one at the moment, a performer who does over a million buys shadow boxing (read fighting Victor Ortiz) and approaches records when his opponent is a top line performer like Cotto.

Cotto (37-2, 30 KO) is a wildly popular fighter with Latino fans, an earnest and technically proficient boxer who will resolutely pursue the man in front of him until he has walked him down and broken him down. He likes to attack opponents on the ropes, which is often where Mayweather enjoys retreating to, and he is a relentless tradesman who comes to the arena to win.

Mayweather (42-0, 26 KO) understands this and respects it about Cotto. Unlike some of his past opponents, Mayweather has made no effort to insult him in the lead up to this event but this week he did have a suggestion for him, one he said wouldn't improve his chances of

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winning but might give him some peace of mind in the final days before they meet.

"If my opponent is (watching) on Live Stream he has to say 'I can't watch this!'" Mayweather said of his live workouts broadcast over the internet. "My opponent may let his trainer watch because the trainer won't have to get in the ring with me.

"I respect Miguel Cotto as a man, always. I don't really know him but he seems like a cool guy. But come May 5th, Cotto is gonna have to make me respect his boxing skills and earn my respect. That's not something you just get from me.

"(Juan Manuel) Marquez, he made me earn his respect. Shane Mosley made me respect his power. I'm pretty sure they respect my fighting skills also."

The implication was that Cotto will be made to do the same if he already doesn't. Although Mayweather admits you never know the measure of a man until you actually are in the ring with him, he is sure that come May 5, Miguel Cotto will quickly understand that the boxer he is in with is faster than the man who badly beat him some time ago – Manny Pacquiao.

Speed is everything in boxing. If you have it you set the agenda. You lay out the boundary of the battle. You dictate the pace and more often than not you start the exchanges and most importantly you end them.

That has been the pattern in the previous 42 Mayweather fights and he fervently believes nothing will change next week. As with all great movers, he will lead and Miguel Cotto will follow because, he says, he will direct Cotto into dark places he doesn't see coming.

"It was a mind trick when Bob Arum made him fight Manny Pacquiao at a catch-weight," Mayweather said of Cotto. "He fell for that didn't he? Another mind trick is when his corner didn't thoroughly check out the hand-wraps of Antonio Margarito. He fell for that didn't he? If a guy falls for certain tricks, he'll fall for it again."

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If there is one thing Mayweather is it's tricky. He is elusive, intelligent and a supreme master of the dark art of boxing. He sets traps and makes opponents pay dearly for falling into them and his instincts are perfectly honed.

He is a defensive fighter but one who turns defense into offense with speed and counter punching ability. In other words, he is a problem for which Miguel Cotto may have no answers.

"My skills are at a different level than any other fighter," Mayweather said. "In the end, skills pay the bills.

"I'm a guy who really doesn't believe in taking no punishment. I believe in dishing it out. I don't want to be praised for being in a war. I don't think a rough, tough fight is cool. I work on my skills day in and day out (to avoid those kinds of nights). I study the sport of boxing.

"I put in the hours. I am mentally ready. I am physically ready. No fighter in the history of the sport is as dedicated as I'm dedicated. I been in front of every style. I'm a master of my craft."

But Mayweather believes he is more than that. He is also a leader of his craft, a man whose responsibilities are not only in the ring and at the pay window but also in the dark corners of boxing where things are going on that only he wants to talk about.

Ever since a fight with Pacquiao was first proposed, Mayweather has consistently insisted random drug and urine testing for performance enhancing drugs be a part of the agreement. For over a year it was a sticking point because Pacquiao refused to agree to random blood testing up to the weekend of the fight.

He has since relented and fight negotiations have broken down over financial matters, as is more the norm. Yet Mayweather has continued to insist his opponents agree to random blood testing, a position he now says may be his true legacy after it is all said and done.

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"I'm the face of boxing," Mayweather claimed. "I have totally changed the sport of boxing and I'm the reason why people don't talk about heavyweights anymore. I'm doing record breaking numbers. Since I'm the face of the sport, I should always be trying to change the sport and make the sport a lot better.

"The best thing is to always put every man on an even playing field. Manny Pacquiao should be standing behind me and saying we should clean up the sport and that he's a clean athlete. I'm letting the world know that Floyd Mayweather is a clean athlete. Eventually random blood and urine testing will be a part of boxing, I truly believe that, and everyone will say Mayweather was the first one. I'll be a part of history and a part of cleaning up the sport that's been around for ages. If you're the best then take the test."

Floyd Mayweather, Jr. will face both tests on May 5, the drug testing he is championing and the test of facing Miguel Cotto not at a catch weight but at the 154-pound junior middleweight limit.

It will be a night of numbers. Pay-per-view numbers. Weight numbers. Punch stats. And the one number that means the most to Mayweather.

It will be the night of zero. Or so he hopes.

"Forty two times the game plan hasn't worked," Mayweather said of his previous opponents. "May 5 we'll have to see. But my game plan is to go out there and be me."

Why should he have any other plan, considering how that one has worked out so far?

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ultimoshogun says:

I used to be one of those guys who would tune in hoping to see Floyd get a beatdown. Although i've always admired his skills, I didn't have much respect for him as a fighter since I felt he was ducking the dangerous opponents. Over the last few years since he's stepped up his

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competition against the likes of DLH, Sugar Shane, Ortiz and Marquez, i've learned to respect him as a fighter. I won't be surprised if this PPV pulls in Mayweather/DLH like numbers.

Radam G says:

It won't pulls in Money May/Big Money Oscar numbers. NO WAY, JOSE! Holla!