

Was The "Mayweather" Doc on CBS Really Such a Disappointment?

Written by Michael Woods
Tuesday, 30 April 2013 14:55



You might have heard, if you're the Twittering type, that the "Mayweather" doc on CBS, done by Ross Greenburg, stank out the joint. Now, I thought it was just fine, from an artistic standpoint, even if, I admit, I preferred the doc that ran April 3, "30 Days in May," which had more of a "reality TV" feel to it.

Now, when I read the opinions of some that it was a ratings dog, I poked around, looking to get a counterpunch perspective. A source at Showtime, who didn't wish to go on the record for attribution, offered up some points and stats and context which might flesh out the whole deal a bit more.

"Mayweather" attracted a little more than 1.7M viewers, not including DVR delayed viewings, which will probably increase the rating when those numbers become available later in the week, I was told. The "Mayweather" rating was more 50% higher than the rating for Pacquiao-Mosley Fight Camp 360, which aired in same time slot (Saturday 8 pm) the week before that fight. FC 360 attracted 1.1M viewers in that time slot.

The "Mayweather" rating was only 20% less than the rating for entertainment programming that aired in the same slot the prior week and was similar to the ratings that NBC and ABC did in the 8 and 9 pm slots.

Showtime, I was told, didn't necessarily expect a one-off special to generate the same rating as the weekly entertainment programming that consistently airs in that time slot – but the fact that viewership was 50% better than for Pacquiao-Mosley, and the rating was in the ballpark of the entertainment programming that aired in the same slot the prior week and what NBC and ABC

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did in the 8 and 9 pm slots - means they weren't displeased with the program, my source told me.

The fact that nearly 2M people watched the special is a huge promotional benefit, to the Showtime crew. By way of context, viewership for the premieres of 24/7 has generally been around 400-500K – meaning that the promotional reach of “Mayweather” was roughly 4X as much as a 24/7 episode, which had been the biggest platform used to promote PPV fights.

The bottom line is that the CBS special did exactly what they intended it to do, the source told me...it exposed the PPV to a bigger audience (and a much different demographic) than otherwise available to Showtime or HBO.

"I would love it if boxing programming were able to generate comparable ratings to mainstream entertainment programming, but that's not where the sport of boxing is today," the source explained to me. "Expecting that – from Mayweather or anyone else – is unrealistic. Building the sport's popularity among the general market and non-sports fans is a process, and it's a process that we are pursuing very aggressively."

So there ya go...As I Tweeted after I started hearing that the Greenburg doc got TKO'd, there are so many options in on-screen entertainment, so it behooves us to remember that a buzz-y show like "Mad Men" only gets something like 3.4 million or fewer viewers. And, "Mayweather" almost beat "Smash" at 8 PM (1.89 to 1.73 million), to look on the brighter side. (Al Bernstein, are you still on the "Smash" bus? Me and the wife hopped off after episode two, season two....)

No, seriously, the show didn't blow the roof off, but sometimes it feels like people root around for the bad news and almost gleefully report it. Maybe they can at least pretend not to savor the schadenfreude so much...Because I think it's fair to say that all of us who cover the sport and work to put programming on would like the sport's popularity to increase. I'm not telling or asking anyone to be a Prozacified cheerleader, blind to bad news...but could they consider not being so quick to reflexively crap on the sport so much of the time?

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Radam G says:

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CBS, it, didn't have down its fly paper. So all the fly peeps, it was not able to keep glued to that flat screen.

Honestly, I was channel surfing or getting distracted when dead spots came up by social-media texting and flexing. Hahaha!

Nonetheless, with the curious, I believe that the doc did okay. Love or hate Money May, attention -- even for a sec to anything about him -- you will PAY! Holla!

amayseng says:

I didn't watch it. I didn't have time or I would have.

I just read on a few sites that the numbers were way down and disappointing.

It's ashame.

Nba is boring and it's off season for football.

Wish the mainstream could get back to boxing like the old days.

Real Talk says:

I guess this is the Bob Arum/ Top Rank show now. Haters. Dueces