

Manny Weighs MORE Than Oscar!

Written by Michael Woods

Friday, 05 December 2008 19:00

Is this a precursor to a larger shocker to come? HBO's scale showed Oscar weighing 147 pounds, and Manny weighing 148 ½ pounds several hours before they were to glove up at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas on Saturday evening. That's right, Manny will be the "bigger man" when the two headliners clash at around 11:30 Eastern time.

Puerto Rico's Juan Manuel Lopez (24-0, 22 KOs) took on Argentine Sergio Medina (33-2), who went to the mat twice in the first half of the round. The fight was halted at the third knockdown, at 1:38 of the first. The crowd booed viciously, as it looked glaringly like Medina came just to collect a paycheck. This was the second defense of the WBO super bantamweight crown for JML. This was another embarrassing matchup, a black mark against Golden Boy, Top Rank and the matchmaker who foisted Medina upon us. His record was built in Argentina, against suspect foes. I reiterate, this is not the way to grow the sport. It is the way to grow the company bottom line in the short term, but not the way to convince a person turning in to his first PPV that they spent their money and time wisely.

Victor Ortiz, touted for giving Oscar fits in his training camp, took on Jeffrey Resto, a former NYC phenom, who is now 31. The 21-year-old Ortiz and the New Yorker both weighed 140 pounds; the California resident Ortiz (24-1) added 14 pounds, Resto (22-3) nine in a day. Resto enjoyed a two inch height advantage. He needed a strong showing, as he'd fought not at all in 2006, once in 2007, and twice already this year. The two lefties started off swiftly. Ortiz started more so. A one-two dropped Resto, who got up with good legs. Or maybe not. A straight left sent him down again. Resto slipped, and went righty, as he tried to exit the first. He did so. In the second, Resto retreated in a straight line, and went down again with 1:49 to go. The ref waved it off when Resto got up at nine, and his body language screamed No Mas. He wiped his left eye, and checked for blood that wasn't there as he stood up. The official time, of the fight and perhaps Resto's career, was 1:19 of round two. Another blowout, unsatisfying to the extreme. You could argue that the NABO junior welter champ Ortiz is simply a monster. OK. But then you had to know that the mentally iffy Resto wouldn't be a suitable foe to give him a truly meaningful tussle. Bad, bad matchmaking. Sorry Eric, sorry Bruce...You guys feel free to write in, and defend yourself, or explain the matches, if you care to. There are always a couple sides to the story, I realize that.

Brooklyn's Danny Jacobs (13-0 12 KOs) beat Victor Lares (14-3) in the TV opener. The TKO came at 2:44 of the second for "The Golden Child." He landed 48-155 while the Texan Lares went 7-58. What a crap opener for the card. Boxing powers that be have the opportunity to grow the sport, seduce some new fans to the sweet science. Think they load up the undercard, put on compelling matches from stem to stern? Nope...because market research shows that PPV consumers really only care about the feature bout. That's their stock answer when you ask them why they have subpar undercards. And you wonder why the sport hasn't added more than 10,000 new fans a year in the US for the last 10 years...They could've spent some of those mega millions they'll be grossing, put on a few title fights, but noooooo...GUYS, get your act together, if you want to be around for the long term.

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Freddie Roach explained to Larry Merchant before the bout that Oscar tapes his hand with packing tape, a heavier tape than he says the commission allows, and also has tape ridges on his hands that could aid his punching power. Also, he said that Oscar has used a plastic guard to protect a balky thumb in the past, but that the commission was alerted to the practice and Oscar wouldn't be allowed to use it before fighting Pacquiao. God, Freddie is a master at headgames. If he were eligible, I'd be voting for Dedham Fred for BWAA Manager of the Year just off his work going into this bout. Masterful. Masterful enough to really get into Oscar's head, and make a difference? We shall see in a couple of hours...

Jim Lampley did a fine job, as always, filling time. He makes downtime tolerable, but really, there is no excuse, NO EXCUSE for having so much downtime in a show you are charging \$55 for. I imagine Dana White, sitting watching this, and laughing his tail off. Think he's worrying that boxing is getting its act together, and gearing up to take back some momentum from MMA? NOTE: It's 10:11 PM, I just texted White. It turns out he was driving to the arena, and missed the undercard "action." So he wasn't in fact laughing.

Merchant earned his keep too. He chatted with Angie Dundee to fill time after Ortiz blasted out Resto at 10:15. I am curious to see how all you guys react to this card, apart from the headline scrap. Maybe that'll be an all-time classic, and we'll all forget the undercard debacle. Check that...even if the feature is a neo classic, this undercard will stick around in my mind. PPV standards must be raised, if the sport is to stem the tide of defections to MMA, and reverse the trend of disinterest from those under 30. But I forgot, market research shows that people only care about the feature bout.