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Reports are starting to surface all over that the most anticipated fight of the last decade is on the verge of being signed. During the last couple days there have been a plethora of reports via the internet, newspapers, cable and broadcast that Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr. have agreed to fight on March 13, 2010. The only issue that hasn't been ironed out is where the fight will take place. Las Vegas and the new billion dollar Cowboys stadium in Texas have been mentioned the most as far as potential host of the fight.

Pacquiao is less than a month removed from his last fight in which he stopped Miguel Cotto in the 12th round to capture the WBO welterweight title. Mayweather's last fight was contested on September 19th when he won a lopsided 12-round decision over Juan Manuel Marquez. Both Pacquiao and Mayweather fought in catch-weight bouts the last time out. Pacquiao weighed in at 145 and Mayweather weighed in a pound heavier at 146 and their upcoming fight, (if the reports are true) will be fought at 147 with Pacquiao's WBO title on the line.

It's almost unfathomable that a super-fight the likes of Pacquiao-Mayweather will be realized so soon after both last fought. That just doesn't happen in boxing. Usually the super big fights are signed five or six months before taking place. And if Pacquiao and Mayweather actually sign to meet on March 13th of 2010, roughly sixteen weeks after Pacquiao's last fight, it'll be the quickest a big fight has ever taken place after the official announcement of it in recent memory.

The quickest a mega fight has ever been realized after it was initially signed was the first fight between "Smokin" Joe Frazier and Muhammad Ali. But there was a huge reason as to why that was the case and the fight happened so quickly.

Frazier-Ali had been in the making since Frazier showed up at Ali's public workout prior to his last title defense of the sixties versus Zora Folley in March of 1967. When Joe showed up someone suggested that he and Ali pose for a picture together. When Frazier advanced towards Ali to pose for the picture, Ali leaned over and put his arm around Frazier and said, "You're too short to give me any real trouble." To which Joe replied, "We'll see about that." Once Frazier fired back at Ali it was on and Muhammad began hyping Joe as a future threat to him and his heavyweight title.

As most know Ali was exiled from boxing and stripped of his undisputed heavyweight title a month after stopping Folley in the seventh round. For the next three plus years while Ali was fighting the United States government in court for draft evasion, Joe Frazier succeeded him as heavyweight champion of the world.

After a 43 month exile Ali returned to the ring on October 26, 1970 and stopped Jerry Quarry in three rounds in his first fight since beating Zora Folley. Six weeks later he stopped Oscar Bonavena in the 15th round on December 7, 1970. Once Quarry and Bonavena were dispatched, the drumbeat for Frazier-Ali, (which was how the fight was billed) began to explode with anticipation.

On December 30, 1970 Joe Frazier and Muhammad Ali signed to fight on March 8, 1971, roughly 12-weeks after Ali beat Bonavena in his last fight. Granted, the interest world wide for Frazier-Ali was unprecedented and the time between the actual signing and the fight itself was unheard of.

But that was for a very good reason.

During Ali's exile, a proposed fight between he and Frazier seemed on the verge of being made but always fell apart before it could be finalized. Once Ali's boxing license was reinstated the thought behind the promotion was to make the fight as soon as possible. And that was because Ali's case for draft evasion was going before the U.S. Supreme Court in June of 1971. The thought at the time was that he was going to lose the case and have to serve his five year prison sentence imposed on him in June of 1967.

The March 8 date was the only open date for Madison Square Garden before the June Supreme Court case. And to clear the slate for the 8th, James Taylor had to agree to not holding a concert that night at the Garden. With the thought being Ali would be going to prison in June, the promoters feared if Frazier-Ali wasn't realized before the June court case, the fight would never happen. And there was way too much money involved for everybody to take that risk.

Given his choice, Ali wanted more time to get ready for Frazier and was hopeful of meeting Joe in mid May. However, Frazier was insistent that the fight take place in Madison Square Garden and March 8th had to be the date.

On March 8, 1971 Joe Frazier won a hard fought 15-round unanimous decision over Muhammad Ali to become the undisputed heavyweight champion of the world. On June 28, 1971 Ali won a bigger fight when the Supreme Court over-turned his draft conviction by an 8-0 vote and the rest is history.

Frazier-Ali was the largest grossing fight in boxing history at the time. And the five million dollar guaranteed purse they split was also the largest purse split by any two fighters at that time. If Pacquiao-Mayweather happens on March 13, 2010 it'll probably be the biggest grossing fight in boxing history. And if it's the biggest grossing fight of all-time Pacquiao and Mayweather may both gross over $40 million dollars apiece which would be a record.

As of this writing it looks as though Pacquiao-Mayweather will be made almost as quickly as the most anticipated fight in boxing history, Frazier-Ali. Along with that Manny and Floyd look to have a real shot at splitting the biggest purse ever in boxing.

And if Pacquiao-Mayweather is half the fight Frazier-Ali turned out to be, we'll all be winners.

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