As 2009 comes to a close, one reflects on what went well and what went wrong during the year in boxing. There were many highlights. Pacquiao vs. Cotto and Showtime's Super Six tournament were part of the best that boxing had to offer. But there were some low points too therefore the industry has some work to do in order to keep generating fans. Here are some suggestions for 2010:

10. Better pay per view cards

Paying 40 to 50 bucks to watch the main event gets old real quick. Why do we have to sit through a horrible under-card to get to the main course? It's like being fed spam appetizers before the Thanksgiving turkey. It seems that the pay per view promoters just don't get it. Are they watching what they put on or do they only watch the "big fight" as everyone else is slowly being conditioned to do so?

9. Time to make Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. fight

Okay, I understand he's the son of one of the greatest fighters that ever lived. But he's had 42 fights against low to mid level competition and has never managed to look spectacular. It's time to throw the 23 year old out of the nest to see if he can fly. My suggestion is a fight against Sergio Mora or maybe even Yuri Foreman. Neither of these guys can punch. They may outbox Junior but they won't totally humiliate him.

8. No more ridiculous Pay Per View mismatches

Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. Juan Manuel Marquez should've never been made. It was a ridiculous fight when it was announced and it was more ridiculous when it took place. Unable to bring Manny Pacquiao to the bargaining table for a third match against Juan Manuel Marquez, someone figured that pairing up the 135 pound champion against a natural 147 pounder like Mayweather would be a great idea. The pay per view generated over a million buys but the fact that millions of people were treated to an incredibly boring mismatch is what's truly worrisome. I can guarantee you one thing about this card. The sport of boxing lost fans once the show was over and done with. Talk about short term thinking.

7. Chris "The Nightmare" Arreola shows up for a fight in amazing shape

It was painful to see Chris Arreola take a beating from the Ukrainian giant, Vitali Klitscho. The champion certainly earned his "Dr. Ironfist" moniker as he plowed his powerful shots into the former #1 WBC heavyweight contender's face. He reddened and bloodied the young Mexican American with an assortment of weapons and foot movement seldom seen on a six foot seven inch heavyweight. Arreola was brave and unrelenting in battle. He never stopped coming forward and took chances when he could. His work in the ring at the Staples Center in downtown Los Angeles wasn't the problem. Where Arreola let himself down was outside the

ring. His unwillingness to condition himself into a finely tuned athlete cost him certain immortality as the first ever heavyweight champion of Mexican descent. Arreola has the heart and skills but it was his mental fortitude that broke down. Anyone who's followed the Riverside fighter knows that his best weight is somewhere in the 230 pound range. It certainly isn't at the 252 pounds he registered on the scale at the Staples Center. Those fifteen to twenty extra pounds might have made all the difference in the world. Maybe he would've been a little quicker, maybe he could've sustained a faster pace in order to tire out the champion. In his most recent fight against Brian Minto, Arreola weighed in at a career high 263. It looks like "The Nightmare" isn't willing to change for anyone. At this pace, the only nightmares he'll be providing will be to the management of Hometown Buffets all across Riverside. Just kidding "Nightmare"!

6. More respect for the lighter weights

Real boxing fans know that the most exciting fighters in the sport are usually found toiling in weight divisions south of 154 pounds. Pacquiao, Cotto, Juan Manuel Marquez, Edwin Valero, Israel Vazquez, Juan Ma Lopez, Vic Darchinyan, Rafael Marquez and countless others have been the real driving force behind this sport. It's those great fighters that have made boxing fanatics out of casual fans. The heavyweights may get all the money and glory but it's the little guys who make the sport shine and it's time they received greater compensation. It's dismaying to think that a mediocre heavyweight can make three or four times as much as the great Rafael Marquez.

5. An American Heavyweight champion

Speaking of heavyweights, two Americans tried and failed at dethroning Vitali Klitschko this year. Both Kevin Johnson and Chris Arreola did their best to wrestle the belt away from "Dr. Klitschko" but came up short since they were easily outclassed. What happened to the great American Heavyweight? Where's our new Joe Frazier or Ali? Even a new Gerry Cooney or a Ken Norton would do at this point. I've got a feeling that the only way we're going to see an American champion is if Klitschko retires. My money is on Arreola. Although undisciplined and rough outside the ring, he's got tons (no pun intended) of natural talent. He's without a doubt the most talented American heavyweight on the scene.

4. More ShoBox

The Showtime Cable network gave us the best boxing on TV for the price of a cable television subscription. Their ShoBox series has been a proven hit for Senior VP of Sports Programming Ken Hershman. The concept is simple yet brilliant. Match up two up and comers with great records and let's see what happens. Sometimes the results are surprising. Many have passed the ShoBox test and went on to bigger and better things. Others have been exposed as having padded records and eventually their careers stall and take a dive.

3. More safety in Mexico so I can attend a show without a gun battle breaking out

Having lived near the Tijuana border all my life I'm dismayed at the war zone that the city has

evolved into. Every day there are reports of shootings fueled by the drug war trade. Believe it or not, there was a time when Tijuana was safe and most wouldn't have thought twice about crossing the border for some seafood and nightlife. No more. Having covered several boxing cards on Revolucion Avenue many years ago, I got a taste of just how important the sport is to Mexican fans. It's also important to me but not that important. For now I'll stick to covering shows at the Pechanga Casino and in the less dangerous city of L.A. I never thought I'd say that.

2. Pac Man vs. Mayweather

This is the fight everyone wants to see. Seeing how Mayweather dominated Pac Man's arch enemy, Juan Manuel Marquez, you have to wonder if the Filipino can handle Lil' Floyd's speed and size. One thing is for sure, betting against Pacquiao doesn't usually work out for me. It never has. There's no future in it. So if the fight gets done it's Pacquiao by TKO in ten.

1. And finally

One final wish is reserved for all the readers of TheSweetScience.com I wish you all a healthy and happy 2010. Thank you for your continued loyalty to the site. It's very much appreciated.