Written by Michael Woods
Tuesday, 06 September 2011 14:54

Follow Woods on Twitter @Woodsy1069. Check out his blog on ESPNNewYork.com on Wednesday, and learn how Manny (r) and Dan Hill (left) hooked up. (Chris Farina)

I don't care what anyone says, Manny Pacquiao can sing. He ain't pitchy, dawg.

Pacman's rendition of "Sometimes When We Touch," with original composer and singer Dan Hill hit all the right notes at the Tuesday press conference in New York to hype the Nov. 12 clash between Pacquiao and Juan Manuel Marquez.

Marquez is of course, Pacquioa's true rival. They've tussled twice, with the first ending in a draw, after Marquez came back in stunning fashion after he was knocked down three times in

the first round. Pacquiao eked out a split decision win when they tried it again in 2008. Two this day, Marquez thinks he won both times, and he has plenty of company among pundits and fans in that department. So this third fight makes much sense.

Fans haven't reacted to the clash with across the board enthusiasm, though; some wonder why it didn't happen earlier, and why it will take place at the junior welterweight-plus weight class. They think Marquez might be in over his head at 144 pounds or less, while Pacquiao looks more than comfortable marching up scale ladder. Me, I say Marquez has Manny's number, to an extent, and think we will see that in evidence to a degree in Las Vegas. Some things such as this just are; this is whay you're mom can make you feel like a 12 year old even when you're 40, and the homecoming queen still holds allure at the 25 high school reunion even though she needs tighter Spanx. Trainer Freddie Roach said he's pondered the same: "That runs through my mind of course, which is why we will work hard and not undertstimate him at all."

This presser could signal the start of Manny's farewell tour. The boxer, who turns 33 on Dec. 17, has been saying that he's feeling more and more of a pull to get even deeper into public service. His term as Congressman ends in 2013, and he said he'll be looking at a mayoral post, or to be governor of his province.

"It's a good thing I'm a Congressman now, there's not a lot of work in the office," he said to a table full of keyboard tappers after the regular presser. "If you're a mayor or Congressman there's a lot of work in the office. I want to be an executive, like mayor or Governor, in 2013. It's hard for me to be an executive and do boxing."

He was of course as gracious and humble as ever, even managing to find a sliver of sun in the soggy weather. "It's raining today but the weather is nice," he said. "I feel like I'm in the Philipines."

Pacquiao seems keen on giving the fans a good rumble, good bang for their buck, after Shane Mosley ducked and dodged and ran for 12 rounds in Manny's last ring effort. The Congressman said he thinks and hopes Marquez will still have his full faculties on Nov. 12, because if and when he beats him, he doesn't want to hear how old Marquez is. "Last fight I trained hard, I expected trading in the ring and it didn't happen. I won the fight but it's not the fight I wanted to give the people. Nov. 12 whatever fight we want we can give to the fans..He throws a lot of punches also."

Pacman told the media that he's more focused this time around than in recent fights, probably because Marquez has told one and all that Pacquiao lost their two prior clashes. He told the media that he started camp last week, a full eleven weeks before the bout, and that he will be sparring the third week of camp.

He seemed quite confident, stressing that he is now a complete fighter, a two fisted terror, rather than the work in progress he was in 2008. Trainer Freddie Roach concurs; he said he wants to remove lingering doubts, tell the world that Pacman is clearly superior to the Mexican. So, does he want Manny to stop the vet?

"One hundred percent yes," Roach said. "They had two very good close fights, we need to make this a decisive win. I want him to not have so much compassion as he has in his last two fights. I want him to end it when he's ready."

There are those that think Marquez will be ripe to be picked off, that he'll be slow at 144 pounds. Arum tried to shoot down the weight issue.

"The weight stuff is nonsense," he said. "Both are going to weigh the same weight as the other just as they did in the first fights. They're older now, they can carry a little bit more weight."

Roach, though, admitted he think the weight situation is a check in Manny's box. "The weight I think definitely favors Manny but we have to put weight on him. Manny walks around at 138, we put weight on him...144 is not a problem, he can have breakfast the morning of the weigh in, he's happy when can do that and when he's happy he's a helluva fighter. We gave them a couple pounds, I wanted it at 147, that's where we are, where he's at his best."

Of course the name Mayweather popped up. Manny said he didn't want to get into the 24/7 family squabble drama, while Roach said he heard about it, and termed it "tasteless."

So, is Floyd scouting lefties, like Ortiz, because he wants Pacquiao next? "It looks like it, yes," Roach said, "but do we really know? He's talking about Manny a lot..maybe he's trying to sell the fight. I want to see it as badly as all of you do, it's a challenge and I love challenges."

"I think Floyd is preparing for our battle," Pacquiao said.

Pacman said he had sparred Ortiz, who her termed a big puncher, and he gives him a puncher's chance against Floyd. Roach weighed in on Victor's chances: "He's a big string kid, good puncher, you've got to give him a shot..I think Victor has a small shot at pulling the upset off."

Marquez carried some fire to NYC, for the record. "I'm looking for a knockout," he said, "with more focus and intelligence." His trainer, Nacho Beristain, lauded Pacquiao and Roach, said it would be quite a feat to beat Pacman at this stage of Marquez' career (was he laying a subtle excuse out there, I wondered), and that he thought Arum's status and sway in Vegas in had helped Pacman with the judges the first two times. Arum responded that in the first fight, he was Marquez' promoter, so...

Me, as always I'm echoing Freddie. I see Manny having a solid edge with his comfort level at that weight. I see him getting countered some, having some brown acid flashbacks to the first two bouts, but getting into gear in the fourth, and using a strength and freshness edge to pull away. Of course, I will look for signs of slippage, too; I wondered if Manny hadn't peaked when I saw him have some balance issues against Mosley. Roach, too, said he'd be monitoring Manny, seeing if he's lost anything.

"I'll be the first one to tell him if he's started to slow down a bit. That hasn't happened yet," said Roach, who would like Manny to fight Marquez, then Floyd, and then hang em up. "That's my own thought, call it a day..I don't think there's anything left to prove."

Pacquiao's right; when he beats Marquez, he won't get full credit because Juan Manuel is 38, and better suited at a lower weight class. Nothing much Manny can do about that. We don't think he'll get too hung up on it. It looks like he wants to win the seat as Governor of his province in 2013, and his plate will be too full at that time to waste much energy on such matters.

Follow Woods on Twitter here https://twitter.com/#!/Woodsy1069

Comment on this article

brownsugar says:

Manny likes too keep it lite with his underated since of humor. Marquez will keepit classy. But Marquez had to struggle against Diaz and Katsidis at his normal weight. He's showing signs of slowing down, but is still maintaining his professionalism. Marquez thrives under fire, even when Mayweather opened up on him Marquez managed to counter effectively,....it was during those few instances that Marquez was able to land on Floyd. Same against Diaz. Maquez is a counter punching machine, he can take solid blows to the chin while simultaneously firing back from inside the pocket..nobody else does it better.... however this time, that strategy while be his undoing..Marquez has faded just enough to allow Pac to have his way via brutally catching the always catchable Marquez with some heavy shots that JM just won't be able to fire back from. You notice Marquez didn't want any part of Soto....Soto would have been too much for him...Marquez patiently waited for his biggest payday..and says adios to his fans with a final ride into the sunset ...only this time he gets carried out on his shield with his boots on. KO BY ROUND 5.

NOTE: I debuted a new blog on ESPN New York. I'd be happy if readers checked in there, too. http://espn.go.com/blog/new-york/boxing/post/_/id/8/welcome-to-the-fightblog

Radam G says:

NICE piece, EM. Dangit! It's gettin' harder and harder for me to hide in plain sight. Suckas are beginning to come up to me and give me the evil eye. Hehehehehe! WTF! I just luv dis game. And YES! Da Manny can sing his arse off. Ya' heard! So now it is time for me to get my dimin' rhymin' on. In the final dance of Pacquiao-Marquez:

Da Manny will strut like a peacock. Da peepee sippin' canvas kisser's ship won't ever get off da dock. Pinoy Time got this fight on lock. You'll make some mad moola, if you bet that stock. Da canvas kisser is now long-n-the tooth with a wobbly limp and a bad lean. Da Manny is gonna whup-a$$ pimp and crush him like a jelly bean! Da Manny's one of the greatest world pugilist that the world has ever seen. Of using steroids, PEDs and mythical Pinoy A-side Meth, he's clean. This! Everybodeee and dey momma can glean. I sh*t you not! I'm a protege of GOAT Muhammad Ali, and not a cyberspace crackpot. Da Manny is gonna finish off da canvas smoocher in round three. And you can take that to the bank! While hiding in plain sight, I'm being quite frank. Holla!