

Mayweather And Pacquiao Should Try Emulating Leonard And Duran..LOTIERZO

Written by Frank Lotierzo

Wednesday, 01 February 2012 09:55



Fans of Floyd and Manny have been fed gimmick and catchweight fights, and fights such as this one, against faded stars recently. Pacquiao and Mayweather should feel shame, and act like Leonard and Duran back in the day, Lotierzo says. (Hogan)

Have you been following professional boxing closely for the last two or three years? If you have, you've no doubt heard about how great the two best pound for pound fighters/boxers on the planet (Floyd Mayweather, 34 and Manny Pacquiao, 33) are. So great that some have wrongly suggested that they're among the elite great fighters in history, even going as far as to suggest that Mayweather is Sugar Ray Leonard's equal or better and Pacquiao is Roberto Duran's equal or better. Are you kidding me? Mayweather and Pacquiao would have to pay admission just to watch Ray and Roberto watch a fight.

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Forget about the waste of time it would encompass debating the merits of Leonard and Duran opposed to those of Mayweather and Pacquiao. If you're of the school that believes Floyd and Manny are equal or superior to Ray and Roberto, you don't know what you've been watching. Instead, let's talk about what stands out most between the pair. How about Leonard, age 24, and Duran, age 29, fought each other twice in two huge PPV title bouts over a span of five months back in 1980? And ironically both fights were contested at welterweight - the same division in which Mayweather and Pacquiao are at the top of the food chain.

It now seems as if Mayweather-Pacquiao gets further away from being realized with each passing day, month and year. And even at its best it was never the Superfight that Leonard-Duran was. And you can bet your house that if they ever fight it'll never be the action packed war that Ray and Roberto delivered back in the summer of 1980.

Remember how tough it was to get Leonard and Duran into the ring in 1980? No? That's because it wasn't. It went something like this. Duran relinquished his undisputed lightweight title in early 1979 and after beating a couple journeymen he defeated former WBC welterweight champ Carlos Palomino (who lost the title to Wilfred Benitez in January of 1979) on June 22, 1979 to become the WBC's second ranked contender. Five months later, Leonard, the number one ranked contender, beat Benitez to capture the WBC title and the countdown to Leonard-Duran began. Seven months later after Leonard (27-0) made one defense of the title against Dave "Boy" Green, he defended it against Duran 71-1 on June 20, 1980 in what's become known as "The Brawl In Montreal."

Yes, Duran bitched and moaned over Leonard getting paid four times more than Duran was guaranteed in the leadup to the fight, but it didn't stop him from going through with it. Actually, what the disparity in purse did was make the fight that much tougher on Leonard. Because other than "Smokin" Joe Frazier going after Muhammad Ali during "The Fight Of The Century," Duran is about the closest I've seen to Frazier when it comes to watching a fighter who refused to be denied the way he went after Leonard during their first fight. Duran was so insulted that Leonard garnered all the hype and attention before the fight that he tortured himself, like Frazier did, in preparing for it. And as it was the case with Frazier, it paid off for Duran too. Like Joe, Roberto conclusively beat the biggest star in the sport at the time when they were both undefeated in what turned out to be the first fight of an historic trilogy.

After losing to Duran, Leonard, like Ali, couldn't rest until he reclaimed what both believed was their birthright, the world boxing championship. When it came time for a rematch, Duran had one request. All he wanted was to make one million dollars more than Leonard and he'd grant him an immediate rematch. Leonard, who was a real fighter like Duran, consented to Duran's wish and they fought for the second time on November 25, 1980. Leonard won the rematch and the rest is history.

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Boxing was enhanced tremendously due to Leonard and Duran setting the stage of what turned out to be a decade of Superfights realized in every division from bantamweight to heavyweight. It seemed as if the Leonard-Duran series in 1980 set the stage for the rest of the decade and every top fighter in every division eventually crossed paths before one of them outgrew the division or started to decline. Today the 80s are referred to as the "good old days" for good reason, they were.

Which brings us back to Mayweather and Pacquiao. A potential clash between them has been marinating since Mayweather took apart Juan Manuel Marquez back in September of 2009 and it's no closer to happening now as it was then. All we've seen since boxing fans have been wondering about how a fight between Mayweather and Pacquiao would turn out is both sign on for gimmick and catch-weight bouts where they were overwhelming favorites.

The fact that the fight hasn't taken place says something about both of them to a degree. No doubt Mayweather has to shoulder most of the blame for the fight not happening, but Pacquiao can't blame Floyd for why he's taken part in a few catch-weight bouts to aid him. And don't give me the line that he's the smaller fighter and was at risk. If the risk is so great, and we know that it's not, then stay in your own division.

Duran didn't insist that Thomas Hearn, Marvin Hagler or Iran Barkley drain down to meet him when they fought at junior middleweight and middleweight. Yes, Leonard fought a catch-weight against light heavyweight title holder Donny Lalonde, and maybe it all started with him. But he never took it to the level of Mayweather and Pacquiao.

Just last week it was reported that both Pacquiao and Mayweather were talking about facing Miguel Cotto for his WBA junior middleweight title, with the difference being Pacquiao wants Cotto to come down to 147 and Mayweather wants to meet him at 150. How big of them! Why can't they fight him at the 154 pound limit? Pacquiao already beat him at 145 back in 2009.

The fact that Mayweather and Pacquiao are trying to stack the deck against an eroded Cotto in order to steal his title is something that joins them at the hip. One thing is for sure, Leonard and Duran would've cut each others' throat in order to get to Cotto first, when it actually meant something to beat him. Now for the next month or so we'll be hearing the names of potential opponents for them to fight next. And on fightnight boxing fans who are thirsting for a big fight will flock to Mayweather and Pacquiao participate in another catch-weight bout or against an opponent who is either on the wrong side of the hill or isn't fully flowered yet. And then the

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drum-beating for them to finally confront each other will start all over again.

There's no denying that Mayweather and Pacquiao are great fighters and the biggest stars in boxing. That said, if they fought during the 70s and 80s, neither of them would be a superstar or top draw. They've both been the beneficiaries of being big fish in a small pond at a time when there's no other fighters/boxers around who have captivated the public's imagination circa 2010-12. And that's the biggest reason why we care so much about seeing them fight.

When all is said and done Mayweather needs to fight Pacquiao more than the opposite. Manny's legacy is pretty much set and he's already beaten greats while he fought at his more natural weight. Mayweather's legacy is much more hollow and shallow and he at least must face one great fighter at or near his prime before he retires. And that great fighter based on his last two bouts appears to be slightly on the decline.

It's amazing how a fighter who throws 20 punches a round, Mayweather, and a fighter who clearly lost his last fight, Pacquiao, can still be the biggest fight in boxing. What does that say about the current state of professional boxing in the year 2012?

Contact the writer at GlovedFist@Gmail.com

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RAMRODRIGO says:

This piece articulates very well what I (and I'm sure, many others) feel about the Pacquiao-Mayweather fight falling through again. It is soooooo frustrating to hear the negotiations slumped by so many things. I believe both fighters and their respective negotiators have lost sight of the true meaning of boxing and the impact of this particular fight to the sport. All fans look to this superbowl fight and no one has really really stepped up to the plate. It's all posturing to get more for themselves. It's greed... greed of fame, greed of money, greed of stature, etc.

Get over yourselves! Its not about 'you' or 'him', its about the sport of boxing and its fans... the rest is icing on the cake... I understand why kids just go for the icing and maybe that's what both camps are at this point... KIDS!

bnt2227 says:

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Genius couldn't have been better stated. Mayweather needs this and Pacquiao needs to stop listening to Bob Arum because it is effecting his legacy.

Money Jay says:

This just in...pending Mayweathers licensing hearing today..Mayweather V. Cotto 5/5/12. It's not May V Pac, but I'll pay for this one...you heard it hear first!

Artlach says:

I didn't know that Pacquiao is after Cotto's middleweight belt yet insists on fighting him at a catchweight of 147 lbs. Is this possible? lol. After the Margarito experience, Pacquiao said that henceforth he would no longer fight beyond the welterweight limit.*

Radam G says:

Da Manny is his on MAN. He makes the final decisions. I'm so reminded of what Mark Twain told Yanks. "Filipinos are not "Part child and part devil. They _____ know how to think for themselves. Uncle Sam and the Ugly American ought butt [da f*** out and shut da f*** UP.]"

Da Manny does his own thinking, and would whup scary Money May's arse. It is MM who has nano-size cojones, won't step up and is running a masterful con on his fanboys, flunkies and metaphobic _____ falling off that cliff from the MM pied piper playing of his fluke.

Fall, nuthuggers, FALL! Money May is laughing his arse off. He's swollen to the size of !0 booga bears and five King Kong with his bullsh*tology on his _____ falling over that cliff. All I can't say is: I ain't hatin' him. It's not his fault about da muthafools born every minutes. Holla!

Brad says:

Wondering why Mayweather and Pacquiao are not more like Leonard and Duran is like wondering why the American Idol kids aren't more like Dylan, Lennon or Joplin- different animals all together. Different time also.It's not really a fair comparison because I seriously doubt May or Pac could have played the games they are playing now (drug test,disputes over splits, both pretending not to need the other,etc) if you could put them in a time machine and drop them in say the 1970's to early 80's boxing world. There was simply too much talent out there back then. Three networks and new cable companies all looking for talent to fill their schedules. Fighters had to take tough fights just to get noticed, to stay current. Today, there is very little demand for boxing on tv and very short supply of superstar talent. Pacquiao and Mayweather both understand this and exploit this.

rjlboxing12 says:

It's funny how konzx who I question what he really does sometimes, and bob arum acted all along that no negotiations were taking place, bob arum was saying that all he needed was a phone number or name of person to talk about the fight al haymon so on and son on. Now after

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mayweather has a fight all these purses and splits everything comes about 50 - 45 all of that sounds like B.S. to me

vinnieq says:

With every failed set of negotiations, the idea of this fight sags more and more...

amayseng says:

moneyjay are you really paying for the cotto floyd fight?

maybe if it was 3 years ago. cotto is a warrior but he is a warrior who is damaged from wars and mainly margacheatos concrete, he has not been the same since. he had a good performance against a dead zombie margacheato in the rematch but he is clearly past his prime, clearly a shell of himself. floyd will have no problem picking him apart and cruising to a decision. what about all the talk of floyd saying manny fights his leftovers, now you can add jmm and now cotto to floyd fighting mannys leftovers. floyd fighting cotto at 154 is respectable, but nor intriguing or exciting, now floyd vs sergio would be a stellar fight and if floyd went to mw to do it it would have created crazy buzz through the mainstream and espn, but floyd protects that record. i wont be buying this fight.

GANZ says:

I agree 100% with amayseng, 2-3 years ago and I would be hyped for this fight but not now.