

Boxing Industry Poll: The Middleweights

Written by Thomas Hauser
Monday, 12 March 2012 16:24



Very few people know or care which belts Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr hold. The multiplicity of world sanctioning bodies and questionable conduct within their ranks has diluted the term “world champion.” Greatness in boxing today rests on identifying “Who’s #1.”

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Sergio Martinez is the #1 middleweight in the world.

Ranking fighters is a difficult process and that process is often arbitrary. The rankings of the world sanctioning bodies are an embarrassment. Even well-intentioned voters often go down a list of names and put them in order without much thought.

Earlier this month, I asked the question, "What would happen if thirteen of the best middleweights in the world fought each other?" This is about now; not how good a fighter was two years ago or how good he might be in the future.

In reality, a round-robin tournament of that nature could never happen. It would require unmakeable matches and 78 separate fights. But thirteen of the most knowledgeable people in boxing agreed to predict the results of these fights.

The thirteen middleweights chosen for consideration, in alphabetical order, are Julio Cesar Chavez Jr, Daniel Geale, Gennady Golovkin, Andy Lee, Matthew Macklin, Sergio Martinez, Martin Murray, Kelly Pavlik, Dmitry Pirog, Grzegorz Proksa, Peter Quillin, Felix Sturm, and Jermain Taylor.

Matchmakers know more about winners and losers in boxing than anyone else. Ten matchmakers participated in the poll. Listed alphabetically, they are Johnny Bos, Eric Bottjer, Tom Brown, Robert Diaz, Don Elbaum, Brad Goodman, Ron Katz, Mike Marchionte, Chris Middendorf, and Bruce Trampler.

Do some of them have biases? I'm sure they do. But in filling out their tournament sheets, each of the matchmakers predicted that fighters they've worked to develop would lose certain fights.

Teddy Atlas, Al Bernstein, and Steve Farhood rounded out the panel. Additional panelists will be added in the future.

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Styles make fights. That was a paramount consideration in predicting the outcome of the match-ups. When the polling was done, 1,014 fight predictions were entered into the data base.

Fighters were awarded one point for each win and a half-point for each draw (too close to call).

A perfect score (that is, each voter predicting that the same fighter would win every one of his fights) would have been 156 points. The results are:

Sergio Martinez 148.5 points

Gennady Golovkin 125

Dmitry Pirog 123.5

Julio Cesar Chavez Jr 95

Felix Sturm 89

Matthew Macklin 71.5

Peter Quillin 67

Daniel Geale 65

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| | |
|-----------------|------|
| Kelly Pavlik | 61 |
| Andy Lee | 57.5 |
| Grzegorz Proksa | 54 |
| Martin Murray | 34.5 |
| Jermain Taylor | 22.5 |

Until proven otherwise, Sergio Martinez is the #1 middleweight in the world. On March 17th, sixth-ranked Matthew Macklin will try to topple him from the throne.

Logic dictates that Gennady Golovkin and Dmitry Pirog (who ran neck-and-neck for second place) should square off against one another with the victor to fight the winner of Martinez-Macklin.

A statistical breakdown of the polling will be forthcoming by clicking [here](#).

I hope to repeat this poll with different weight divisions in the future. It has the potential to make a difference in boxing.

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| | Chavez | Geale | Golovkin | Lee | Macklin | Martinez | Murray | Pavlik | Pirog | Proksa | Quillin | Sturm |
|----------|--------|-------|----------|-----|---------|----------|--------|--------|-------|--------|---------|-------|
| Chavez | — | 10 | 1½ | 10½ | 9½ | 1 | 12 | 9½ | 5 | 10½ | 9½ | 4 |
| Geale | 3 | — | 1 | 7½ | 6 | 0 | 9½ | 6½ | 1½ | 8½ | 7 | 3½ |
| Golovkin | 11½ | 12 | — | 11 | 12½ | 1½ | 12½ | 12 | 7 | 11 | 12 | 9 |
| Lee | 2½ | 5½ | 2 | — | 4½ | 0 | 9½ | 5 | 1 | 7 | 4 | 5½ |
| Macklin | 3½ | 7 | ½ | 8½ | — | 0 | 10½ | 8 | ½ | 5½ | 8 | 6 |
| Martinez | 12 | 13 | 11½ | 13 | 13 | — | 13 | 12 | 9½ | 13 | 13 | 12½ |
| Murray | 1 | 3½ | ½ | 3½ | 2½ | 0 | — | 4 | ½ | 5½ | 3½ | 2½ |
| Pavlik | 3½ | 6½ | 1 | 8 | 5 | 1 | 9 | — | 1 | 3 | 7 | 5½ |
| Pirog | 8 | 11½ | 6 | 12 | 12½ | 3½ | 12½ | 12 | — | 12½ | 10 | 10 |
| Proksa | 2½ | 4½ | 2 | 6 | 4½ | 0 | 7½ | 10 | ½ | — | 4 | 3 |
| Quillin | 4½ | 6 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 0 | 9½ | 6 | 3 | 9 | — | 5 |
| Sturm | 9 | 9½ | 4 | 7½ | 7 | ½ | 10½ | 7½ | 3 | 10 | 8 | — |
| Taylor | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2½ | 0 | 5½ | 2½ | 0 | 3½ | 4 | ½ |

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