It's been awhile since Oscar (here in 2003) and Arum were even cordial. It would be good for the sport if they could bury the bad blood and co-exist, so some fights we all want to see get made. Our collective fingers are crossed. (Hohan Photos)

I dare say there are no more frustrated sports fans than boxing fans. The single fight that 99% of them want, Mayweather-Pacquiao, doesn't get made, for reasons that nobody can fathom, and the heavyweight division, the It division, is stuck in a Bronze Age, and a fairly reasonable desire that the rooters would like to see the game's dealmakers adhere to, "get the best to fight the best," does not come to fruition near often enough.

The frustration bubbled to the surface when it became apparent that indeed, as rumored, there would be two big cards taking place on the same night, Sept. 15. Sergio Martinez would try to show young buck Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. that he was a pretender to the throne, that he didn't deserve to so much as borrow the WBC 160 pound crown, on HBO pay-per-view, while over on Showtime, Canelo Alvarez would take the next step in his trek to become one the replacements for the Big Two, Floyd Mayweather and Manny Pacquiao, when they exit the fistic scene.

There they go again, some groused. Two big cards, same night, the giants paying more attention to their battle of attrition than the needs and desires of the fans, the customers, the grumbling went.

The grousing was minimized somewhat, I will say, when folks realized that the Canelo fight, originally pegged as a pay-per-view, with the Mexican battling Victor Ortiz, was graded down to "regular" cable, to Showtime, because Canelo's foe was shifted to Josesito Lopez, who upset Ortiz a few weeks ago, and thus, stole his thunder and the slot. But yes, many fans did react with disgust, wondering why too the power brokers once again were engaging in zero sum warfare, again engaging in brinksmanship, and a "mine's bigger than yours, no mines bigger" beef...when all the fans wanted was the suits to get along, or at least, get along enough so that the fights that most make sense to be made, get made. If Top Rank, with the most formidable stable, and Golden Boy, with the next most formidable stable, aren't on speaking terms, and cannot sit down at the same table to negotiate, let alone sit down and hash out deals so inter-promotional bouts get booked, fans groused, then the sport will suffer for it. Sounds fairly logical to me; hey, I'm a Libra, I am inclined to be of the Rodney King "can't we all just get along" mindset who figures that people should set aside personality conflicts, and feuds, and ancient history, and keep things on a pure business level, and get deals done. They should serve the fans, the people who open their wallets up and fuel the sport. I delved into this topic with promoter Bob Arum, who was in town Thursday, presiding over a press conference to hype the Sept. 15 middleweight showdown. We chatted at the Edison Ballroom in midtown Manhattan.

So, Bob, is the fight press making too big a deal of the fact that there are two big fights on Sept. 15?

"There aren't two big boxing cards on the same day," he reasoned to me. "You're referring to Alvarez and Lopez as a big boxing card, it's a 20-to-1 fight. You guys make too big a deal (of dates falling on the same night). What is pathetic is Showtime wasting money putting on an event to go against the biggest fight of the year so far. There's no question it's the biggest fight of the year. It's not a good business plan for Showtime."

Hmm, doesn't look like Top Rank and Showtime are going to be doing deals anytime soon, judging by that level of rancor, right? Well, strange bedfellows are thrown together all the time in boxing. I mean, I heard Arum refer to Lou DiBella as "my friend" at the presser and it wasn't that long ago that I heard DiBella label Arum as an expletive deleted, a hardcore negative affecting the sport. So, enemies can quickly become frenemies if the deal is good enough. It's not like Top Rank and Golden Boy haven't found enough common ground to work together before. But the last time came back in 2009, when Manny Pacquiao met Ricky Hatton, and it looks like a deep freeze was cemented when Golden Boy sued Top Rank to force a look into Top Rank's accounting practices with Pacquiao. Golden Boy argued they were due monies from Pacquiao's fights with David Diaz, Miguel Cotto and Joshua Clottey, because after Pacquiao signed deals with both companies in 2006, a mediation was reached which allowed for Golden Boy to receive a percentage of revenue from Pacman fights. No, I am not exceedingly optimistic that these two super powers make like Reagan and Gorbachev, and hug it out; that's too bad, because we all know in just about every weight division, that lessens the number of compelling fights that could be made. (Do you think if we had a central oversight body, and a commissioner of boxing, he or she wouldn't force these two entities to kiss and make up and do what is best for the sport as a whole? Rhetorical question...)

Now, to the point that having two big cards--and I do think the Canelo-Lopez fight is a "big" card, even if not in the same league as this long-awaited middleweight tussle--is deleterious to the sport, and a slap in the face to fans...I chatted with a heavy-duty power broker recently, and put the question to him. He said no, it's not a big deal. First and foremost, the toughest job for a promoter or a network is to get sports fans to stay home on Saturday night, and choose boxing over the bar, or the movies, or whatever. That task is basically accomplished with the Martinez-Chavez Jr. fight. Real fight fans are going to see that as appointment viewing. And in this day and age, the percentage of fight fans who own DVRs is huge; Showtime can rest pretty easy knowing that boxing fans aren't going to blow off the Canelo fight because of the Martinez-Chavez Jr. bout. They might watch it after, but they will watch it. Now, would it be a problem, would there be an issue of cannibalism if both cards were pay-per-view cards? Yes, our expert conceded, that'd be a different deal. But it looks like, to an extent, sanity prevailed when it was decided that the Canelo bout would run on Showtime, not on pay-per-view. All in all, to me, it just means I am staying up a little later on the morning of September 16.

Readers, what say you? Weigh in with your thoughts on the promotional Cold War. Feel free to offer encouragement to Arum and Richard Schaefer and Oscar De La Hoya to make amends to each other, to get on the same page, so the best bouts can be made. Let us encourage sanity, and if not across-the-board peace and love, then enough of those to get Top Rank and Golden Boy to the same table, so many of the fights we want, get made. Isn't life too short for grudges, and to let bad blood fester for so long?

Comment on this article

Radam G says:

Wow! We don't need any kissing and singing kumbaya jive. Making up is for ___ ____ ___! Later for the civility between promoters. Da Game would lose its suspense with peace between promoters. The threatre of the promoters bytching, fibbing and gettin' into the fanfaronades and groupies heads is a necessary evil of da game.

How would it look if the world decides straighten up the Learning Tower of Pisa? Not good. Da game by nature is crooked. I couldn't imagine somebody fudging up a banana and straighten it out. WTF! C'mon Pisa would lose its charm and appeal with a straighten up. And boxing would lose its " threatre of the unexpected" and total bullsh*tology with a BobFather-Golden Boy PATCH UP!

Let Da BobFather-Golden Boy war continue. Holla!