

Robert Guerrero Has Always Wanted To Fight the Best

Written by Raymond Markarian
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If you want to know what happened to the best fighting the best in boxing, Robert Guerrero seems to know the answer. He is just looking for another fighter to think the same way.

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When I met Robert Guerrero over three years ago and asked him who he wanted to fight, the confident 130 pounder said Manny Pacquiao, the same Manny who was fresh off of putting Oscar De la Hoya in retirement.

I thought... Well, let's put it this way, I thought he had a lot of guts, because boxing is a political sport, and I was guilty of thinking politically.

"Why does Robert Guerrero deserve a fight with Manny?" was the first thought that came to my mind. "Pacquiao is too big and too strong," was another one.

Yet, for all the political faults, mismatches, and bad decisions, in boxing, the sport has an old fashion quality of letting arguments linger.

(See Leonard/Hagler, Lewis/Tyson, Mayweather/Pacquiao)

Robert Guerrero has called out marquee names to fight for years. First it was Juan Manuel Marquez, then Manny Pacquiao, and Floyd Mayweather, with no success.

In January of this year, Guerrero almost got his wish to fight Mayweather when I reported the potential Mayweather/Guerrero fight close to fruition.

That led to Mayweather calling the name of Manny Pacquiao, but Mayweather eventually fought Miguel Cotto, and it left Guerrero without a dance partner. Until last month, when Robert Guerrero moved up two weight classes to win a version of the welterweight title against Selcuk Aydin in front of hometown fans in San Jose, Ca.

After the victory at the post fight press conference, Guerrero spent more time challenging Floyd Mayweather than praising the performance he called "the toughest fight of his life."

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Guerrero said, "I have all of these titles but no one wants to fight. It's crazy, I have all of these titles and no one wants to fight."

He said it twice. And it sounded strange, but everyone in the room understood. A statement like that carries weight in boxing.

Robert Guerrero has won many titles in multiple weight classes, including the welterweight one. But he is not the publicly recognized welterweight champion until he defeats Floyd Mayweather, or Manny Pacquiao. Guerrero gets it, so he continues to call their names out.

You can call it forward thinking for The Ghost. Or call it what The Joker likes to call, "A misplaced sense of self-righteousness."

Call it what you want, the beauty of Guerrero is that his story never changes.

Here's a look at some of the best quotes I got from Robert Guerrero over the years. You might notice a trend sounding like a broken record. Guerrero's always wanted to fight the best. Check how this 35-month timeline sounds like a flowing conversation from one interview to the next.

January 4, 2009: *In our first interview the 126 pound champion moving up for his first fight at 130 pounds dares to confront Manny Pacquiao, says he has the style to beat him.*

RM: Well, who would you want to fight, if you had a choice?

RG: Pacquiao would be my first choice. If you put two explosive lefties together it will be a war. I feel like I have the perfect style to beat him.

RM: Why is that?

RG: I have the speed and power. They say people are afraid to come in on Pacquiao, but I have fought a lot of lefties before. If you get a guy that could push Pacquiao back, then you have a real good fight.

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RM: You have a point. Pacquiao has not fought many guys that can make him go backwards. If you could do that against him then it would definitely be an interesting fight.

RG: Yeah, Pacquiao has not fought a natural lefty with speed and power that could stand and trade with him, and also bring in side-to-side movement. I just feel like I have the style to beat him.

March 3, 2009

More Manny Pacquiao talk- this time Guerrero explains his motivations to be great...

RM: So if you got into the ring with Manny, it would be more of a pressure fight?

RG: I would put a lot of pressure on him and throw a lot more punches than he is accustomed to. I also have a left-handed style that always makes it difficult.

RM: Hey, speaking of motivation to fight the best, I have a question. When you get tired in the gym and want to push yourself to do that extra rep or extra sparring session, do you picture yourself fighting a guy like Manny Pacquiao? Or do you have some other type of motivation? How do you motivate yourself to work harder in the gym to be a great professional fighter?

RG: Wanting to be the best... Wanting to be the one of the greats in boxing forces me to dig down, suck it up, and push myself. In the long run, that is going to ultimately make me become a more skilled fighter, going the extra mile, and leaving no stone unturned.

June 1, 2009:

Guerrero turned his attention to the best at 130 & 135, mostly Juan Manuel Marquez...

Guerrero said:

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"I have been wanted to get into some big fights for some time. I want to get a (Juan Manuel) Marquez fight. Humberto Soto is out there. There are a lot of big fighters out there, especially at 130 or 135 pounds.

August 6, 2011:

Guerrero says he is a throwback fighter and is willing to prove it... He agrees to fight feared 140-pound puncher, Marcos Maidana, in San Jose, Ca.

RM: So you are a five-time world champion in four different weight classes, right?

RG: Yes sir.

RM: And you have moved up four weight classes since 2008 and beaten everyone that you have faced. Is it frustrating when you do not see your name on many of the top ten pound for pound lists?

RG: It does get to me. But at the end of the day you have to keep on trucking. Every great champion has his day to get recognized. I just have to keep doing what I do. That is why I take fights like Marcos Maidana or Michael Katsidis. I am looking for the best fights out there. I am one of those throwback fighters who fight the best to be the best. I am not going to hide, duck, and run from everybody.

RM: Do you think that the best fighters are afraid of you?

RG: I think a lot of fighters take a big gamble and a big risk fighting me. It is the way it is. And that just adds fuel to my fire. If I keep doing what I do then the fans and the media are going to back these guys into a corner. Pretty soon they are going to be forced to fight me. You have seen it over the years, history does repeat itself, Ray. When everybody wants to see a fight it is going to happen.

RM: I don't want to take anything away from the Maidana fight because I think fight will be exciting. But is there anyone that you would like to fight after a potential victory over Maidana?

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RG: Everyone knows that fight, Manny Pacquiao. He is pound for pound the best fighter in boxing. I know Pacquiao does not run or duck from anybody. Like I said, I am one of those throwback fighters. I want to be the best. And if you want to be the best you have to beat the best.

RM: When I talk to you it sounds like I am speaking with a guy that just started boxing. You seem to have so much passion for the fight game. Why do you think that the fire is still strong inside of you?

RG: I love the sport so much. I grew up in a family of fighters. My grandfather was a fighter, my father, my uncles, and brothers were fighters. It is just a family tradition. To keep boxing alive you have to love it. That is what lacks in boxing, the champions that do not want to fight the fights that they should be fighting. And it turns a lot of fans off. I loved boxing when I was a kid because you would see the best fighting the best. And that is the way it should be.

November 19, 2011:

Two months after pulling out of a fight with Marcos Maidana because of a shoulder injury that required surgery, Robert Guerrero decided to move up to welterweight and call out the name of Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Multiple press releases, articles, and interviews followed. Guerrero and his team were pushing for a Mayweather fight like no one before.

RM: I have seen you call out a lot of fighters in the past. But not many fighters have gone to the lengths you have to call out Floyd Mayweather. Everyone wants to fight him. But you are doing it differently. There are press releases talking about the potential fight, predictions from boxing experts, and you have gone on talk shows to call him out. What makes this fight any different from the other challenges you have made?

RG: You know Floyd is the ultimate challenge. He is the best fighter in boxing right now hands down. And I am like those throwback fighters man, I want to fight the best. Every time I call out the best like Marquez, Pacquiao, or Khan, none of them want to fight. We are approaching this challenge like 'Hey, let's make it happen. I know he set that date. Cinco de Mayo. I am Mexican-American right here. Let's do it.'

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RM: No doubt. I have seen you fight. And you do a lot of great things in the ring. But the nature of this interview is for me to play devil's advocate. What makes you think that you could beat a fighter that has never been beaten?

RG: I have a lot of faith in my ability. I believe I could beat anybody in the world. If you go into the ring without confidence, it haunts you. A guy like Floyd Mayweather, who is intelligent in the ring, takes advantage of weaknesses like that. I am that type of guy that is here to fight. I am here to take care of business. Nobody intimidates me. I ain't scared of anybody. I go in the ring to win the fight. I don't go in there just to fight.

RM: Do you think some of Floyd's recent opponents just went in the ring to survive?

RG: You have to have a killer instinct. You have seen me fight. I go in with a killer instinct. Some people doubt themselves. Floyd has the utmost confidence in himself. That is why he is so dominant. That is why he hasn't lost a fight. I am 100% confident in myself.

RM: You have to go in 100% confident right?

RG: Yeah, you have to be. The one thing I love is doubters. When I am the underdog I step up. I am a playmaker. When it is time to make that play, I am there. I will hit that home run.

RM: So, you want to fight the best. And Floyd is the man with the guts to take you on. Is that how it boils down?

RG: He says he takes on all challengers. Everything is there to make that big fight. I could sell a big fight. The last fight I was supposed to have with Maidana was a sellout. It is all there for us to make a big fight with me and Floyd Mayweather.

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RM: What's your prediction for that fight, maybe a knockout?

RG: With me and Floyd?

RM: Yeah.

RG: Who knows? I believe in myself. I believe I could knock him out. Anything could happen in boxing. If you believe in yourself and have faith, anything could happen.

RM: Do you expect Floyd to accept your challenge? Or do you think he is not really paying attention?

RG: I know he is paying attention. Floyd Mayweather would not be pound for pound best fighter in the world if he wasn't paying attention. Even when he retired he was paying attention. I am expecting him to take on the challenge.

RM: Do you have a message for Floyd Mayweather?

RG: Yeah, the only way this fight will not be made is if he doesn't want it.

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The boxing public is witnessing the growth in Robert Guerrero. It just took a bit longer than he might have expected.

Now, when Guerrero shouts at Mayweather, Pacquiao, (or most recently Adrian Broner,) it's

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front-page boxing news. In the past, Guerrero built his campaign on guts for calling out the best, now he does it with clout.

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