

BORGES Floyd Was Great, But It Wasn't A Fan-Friendly Scrap

Written by Ron Borges
Monday, 06 May 2013 08:12



Predictions of Floyd Mayweather, Jr.'s looming demise at 36 were clearly overblown but what beyond a display of his defensive wizardry was gained in his one-sided victory over Robert Guerrero Saturday night?

Well, you could start with the \$32 million guaranteed paycheck he left the MGM Grand Garden Arena with after being awarded a well-deserved but far from crowd pleasing 117-111 decision

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that retained his WBC welterweight title and lifted his record in world championship fights to 21-0.

You could also point out that those who feared Mayweather's legs had begun to desert him saw them on full display all night, a number of times moving him so quickly off the ropes that Guerrero fell into them while trying to muster an attack against an opponent who had already fled the scene.

Even the disappointed Guerrero (31-2-1, 18 KO) had to give Mayweather (44-0, 26 KO) props for his elusiveness if not his boldness not long after his volcanic father had bellowed from inside the ring after the fight ended: "He ran like a chicken!"

"He was definitely on his game tonight," the younger Guerrero conceded. "He really moved in the ring tonight. He's very slick, very quick. He has a great defense. That's why he's undefeated. He did his thing."

The problem was "his thing" was roundly booed by the crowd of 15,222 at the MGM Grand Garden Arena, many of whom grew increasingly bothered by Mayweather's refusal to engage. With his father back in his corner after a 13-year absence, what also returned was the passive, defensive shell Floyd, Sr. had schooled his son in so well as a young boy that he became the best defensive fighter since Pernell Whitaker.

Unfortunately, with that also came the displeasing absence of offense that limited Whitaker's popularity with the boxing public. Mayweather suffered from the same for a number of years but after his father's absence he began working with his uncle Roger and slowly became more offensive minded.

Naturally that led to being hit more often than in his early days as well but it also made him far more popular as he began to punish opponents not only by embarrassing them with his slick defensive maneuvering but also with the stinging results of his fast hands.

This reached its height-nadir in his last fight, a win over Miguel Cotto a year ago in which his lip

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and nose were bloodied despite winning a clear decision. Mayweather said that experience led him to ask his father to return to his side, putting aside the well-documented differences between them that once led them not to speak for seven years.

The elder Mayweather's revival had three immediate results: his brother Roger was derailed and did not work his nephew's corner Saturday night after working with him in training camp; his son was seldom touched by the flailing Guerrero; and the crowd was bored half to death by the absence of anything resembling either risk taking or aggression.

Mayweather attributed some of that to a claim of injuring his right hand after repeatedly landing it square in the face of Guerrero, a southpaw vulnerable to such a punch. He insisted this was why he did not score a knockout late in the fight, especially in the eighth round when he seemed to stun Guerrero but didn't work hard enough to close the show that round.

"People thought the layoff would play a factor but it did not," said Mayweather. "I felt I got hit by too many shots against Cotto. I had to bring the defensive master back – my father.

"I was boxing smart. After the Cotto fight I realized my defense was not as sharp as it should be. The less you get hit the better. The great thing about my father is he says if you're winning and not taking punishment keep doing it.

"The last thing my father told me was 'I'm gonna tell you what's going to get him – right hands all day.' I went out and executed the game plan delivered to me. I showed the world I could still box. My defense is still there."

That was made obvious not only by the half dozen or so times Guerrero reached out to hit Mayweather only to find him gone as he fell into the ropes punching air, but also by his 11 per cent connection rate with his jab and 19 per cent overall connection rate (113 of 581) according to CompuBox statistics.

Just as telling, in his first two appearances as a welterweight Guerrero averaged 71 punches per round. Against Mayweather that was nearly halved to 48, a sign that Mayweather's

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elusiveness, agility and reflexive reaction time had caused Guerrero to grow tentative and unwilling to punch.

"If you call that running you must be blind," Mayweather Sr. said in response to Guerrero's father/trainer, Ruben, claiming Mayweather "ran like a chicken" all night. "Floyd just made his son look like a fool all night."

Certainly as the fight wore on Guerrero (31-2-1, 18 KO) found it more and more difficult to find Mayweather. Even when he had him on the ropes or in the corners, Guerrero had trouble creating safe punching distances, often being tied up by Mayweather or punching from too far away at an apparition who kept sliding off, often slipping behind him before he could land.

Yet as brilliant as his defense was, Mayweather's offense was absent much fire beyond a steady stream of right hand leads his father told him would decide the fight. They did, repeatedly going unblocked as they slammed into Guerrero's face often enough to finally put a divot above his left eye but they were seldom accompanied by a following left hand and even less often did he try to press his obvious advantages.

Instead Mayweather boxed like he was working for Mutual Life, working the actuarial tables of risk reduction. While that earned him an easy victory it also earned him the enmity of the crowd and, in the end, it is the crowd that pays you.

They began to boo midway through the fight and that persisted into its final rounds and after the final bell tolled. Seemingly unmarked and uncaring, Mayweather said if his right hand was ready he would return on Sept. 14, which would be the quickest he'd been back in the ring in 13 years.

Whether anyone is there to watch or, more significantly to his benefactors at SHOWTIME, whether 1.3 million people (SHOWTIME's break even point on Mayweather's six-fight contract) are willing to again pony up \$70 to watch what appeared to be a shadow boxing exhibition by a Quaker remains to be seen.

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tlig says:

The words Floyd and fan-friendly (especially when it regards a fight) have never, as far as I know, appeared in the same sentence. I doubt they even appear in anyone's imagination.

jzzy says:

True boxing fans appreciate Floyd's masterly technique. He will never be a brawler, he doesn't punch

hard enough and his fans don't expect that. Clever matchmaking and promotion will fill the seats. Guerrero

and his team did a great job selling the fight, he appeared to be a credible threat to Floyd. The real surprise was how inept Guerrero was in the ring. The sweet science is becoming a lost art.

amayseng says:

Jzzy Floyd is a razor sharp accurate puncher and he has buzzing power.

He's not a knockout artist no but he hits hard enough to damage guys.

The problem is Floyd averaged only 39 thrown punches per round.

That is pretty poor.

Hopkins at 48 in his last fight seemed more active.

Carmine Cas says:

You're right Amayseng, Floyd has buzzing power and that's really all you need. Yes knockout power is great and it always is a benefit but what happens sometimes is that fighters strictly rely on their power and forget how to set up their opponents. You need to have your opponent respect your punching power, and have enough to keep them off you. Floyd fought a great fight but the fans were ripped off, if you truly appreciate the sweet science it was fun to watch. However Floyd could have thrown more punches

DaveB says:

That says it all. If you appreciate the sweet science he is fun to watch. Most of the general public are not hardcore boxing fans and it will be interesting to see if they can get people to keep ponying up \$70 to watch him.

amayseng says:

Id say no daveB the common public wont be buying his next fight.

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The numbers will drop.

I've read a slew of sites where common non hardcore fans are upset.

They didn't know enough of what they were buying and were quite disappointed.

Floyd held A LOT, and ran a lot as well.

Tying a guy up is one thing but holding so much is another.

The non hardcore fan isn't about the sweet science.

They are about being entertained.

39 punches per round won't do it.

Radam G says:

The general public will always buy promotions of the next hyped-up pretender kicking Money May's arse. Money May will keep getting on his dash. And the suckas born every sec will be running to see him with credit cards, bank cards and hard-earned cash.

C'mon, guys! There is no shade, call a spade a spade. Money May has it made. And the amount of fans and fanfaronades coming to see him are not going to fade. Holla!

leon30001 says:

[QUOTE]The real surprise was how inept Guerrero was in the ring[/QUOTE]

I wasn't that surprised, he's not that good of a fighter in my opinion. That's why Floyd fought him. Neither is Berto so I didn't give that win much credence.