

Why The Heck Is Floyd Mayweather Boxing's Biggest Star?

Written by Frank Lotierzo

Tuesday, 18 June 2013 09:15



It was recently announced by Forbes Magazine that Floyd Mayweather is the highest-paid athlete in the world. It was estimated that he's grossed over 90 million dollars in the last year and didn't earn one dollar via endorsements. Meaning he made 50 million dollars more than the top-rated golfer in the world, Tiger Woods, and 40 million dollars more than the single best

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player in the NBA, Lebron James.

Today Mayweather is by far the biggest star in professional boxing. Aside from perhaps Manny Pacquiao, Mayweather is the most relevant fighter in the sport, especially in the United States. It's gotten to the point that a Mayweather tweet, regardless of whether or not it's about his next fight or an NFL/NBA game that he bet, keeps the Internet riveted for days at a time. When he fights, ESPN, which doesn't even cross promote the fights they air on ESPN2, cover the weigh-in for his fights and discuss his personality and career impact on many of their rehearsed good guy/bad guy debate programs.

When one thinks about how Mayweather has become such a huge personality, it's nothing short of astonishing. Think about it, back in the summer of 2005, Mayweather had to take less money than his opponent, the late Arturo Gatti, just to be part of the main event on a pay per view card. So the question that must be answered is why has Floyd been able to transform himself into the most significant fighter in professional boxing considering.....

*Mayweather wasn't a gold medal winner at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta in which he participated in. Meaning that there wasn't much ballyhoo surrounding his pro-debut like there was Muhammad Ali, Sugar Ray Leonard and Oscar De La Hoya. Actually, Mayweather's teammate David Reid, the only American Gold medal winner during those games, garnered much more attention and hype than did Mayweather. Basically, Mayweather fought as a pro for nine years before most quasi boxing fans knew of him.

*Mayweather severely lacks the charm and charisma that superstars the likes of Muhammad Ali, Sugar Ray Leonard and Oscar De La Hoya had in abundance. Floyd isn't interesting at all to watch or listen to during an interview. And he can't converse during an interview regardless of the format without trying to convince the interviewer/audience of his greatness. He's not particularly funny nor is he that insightful, at least that we've seen, unless he's talking about his career. Ali and Leonard would be more entertaining watching an interview than Mayweather is participating in one.

*Mayweather has never been involved in terribly exciting fights. Part of that is due to his mastery of the ring and part of that is because he's picked his spots when he finally met some of the better fighters he's faced, especially since he's campaigned above 135. For most fighters to be a draw, fans need to believe that regardless of the outcome they're going to see something thrilling or exciting when they watch them fight.

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*Mayweather's style can really only be appreciated by sophisticated boxing observers. He's not as fast or flashy as Muhammad Ali, Sugar Ray Leonard, Hector Camacho or Roy Jones were at their best. He's more of a rich man's Bernard Hopkins who takes what the opponent gives them and works off of that. Usually, only the real hard core fight fans enjoy watching a smooth technician work, fully aware that they're probably not going to see a knockout or very memorable punches or exchanges the majority of the bout.

*Mayweather doesn't destroy anybody. He doesn't leave fighters splattered on the canvas the way the likes of a Bob Foster, Thomas Hearns or Roberto Duran did during his lightweight title reign. And that's not a shot at him or his style because his style is one to behold if you know what you're watching when viewing professional boxing at the highest level. However, the masses who buy Mayweather's fights want to see knockouts and knockdowns, which cannot be taken for granted when Floyd fights. Yet, enough fringe boxing fans flock to see him when he fights?

Most of the time for a fighter to be the face of boxing, he must be an off the chart talent with charisma the likes of Muhammad Ali or Sugar Ray Leonard (or Roy Jones). Oscar De La Hoya was a huge draw but he was more of a media creation than he was a special fighter. Mayweather may be a little more cerebral than Ali and Leonard, but he wasn't as skilled, fast or flashy. And unlike Ali and Leonard, Floyd has the perception of avoiding the fighter who at one time was viewed at having the best chance to beat him in Manny Pacquiao. Which is a shame because there has never been a night during the years they've been pros that Mayweather wouldn't have conclusively defeated Pacquiao.

Mike Tyson was the face of boxing during most of his prime. Granted, Tyson's victories weren't against opposition that resembled murderers row, but he did get rid of all the B-level fighters he faced in an impressive fashion. Tyson was a draw because he could be hyped and promoted as a genuine life-taker, and his knockout record, despite the opposition, backed it up. So it's easy to see why quasi boxing fans flocked to watch Mike Tyson. They didn't care that he wasn't facing Ali, George Foreman, Joe Frazier or a prime Larry Holmes, they just wanted to see him knock someone out. In contrast, as already established, most of Floyd's fights don't end memorably.

When you examine Mayweather's career, there isn't that one fight in which you'll think about where you were 10 years from now when you watched it compared to some of the greats listed above. We've seen better boxers than Mayweather, faster and flashier fighters, bigger punchers

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and greater warriors than Floyd, yet his next fight against an unproven Saul Alvarez this coming September will dominate the boxing world the weeks prior to the fight.

I'm astonished that a fighter who isn't among the top three boxers, talents, speedsters, punchers, warriors or charismatic personalities of the last 40 years who is known for safely managing his career, is clearly the standard bearer of professional boxing. And with his top five future opponents last names' being Khan, Alexander, Garcia, Ortiz and Alvarez, that's not likely to change.

One must conclude that Mayweather realized around 2005 that he wasn't the kid next door and was best suited to be promoted as the bad guy, despite the fact that he's more closer to being a decent guy who is insecure about his standing and legacy historically. Floyd learned the business of selling and hyping not just himself but his fights and what him partaking in them should mean to all viewers and fans. Add to that his pristine record of 44-0 (26), fans who root against him have a reason to watch him fight, hoping that they'll see it live if he ever loses. In the mean time he's laughing all the way to the dealership to buy his next Rolls Royce, Bentley and Lamborghini.

Mayweather wouldn't be the face of boxing today if there was an Ali, Leonard, De La Hoya or Tyson around, but they're long gone. Give him credit for being able to make a safety first counter-puncher who avoided the only fight fans wanted him to deliver, to become the face of what once was the greatest sport in the world. And to Mayweather's credit, due to what he's had to work with, he couldn't have played it any better inside or outside of the ring.

Mayweather didn't make one dime on endorsements in the last fiscal year, something which is unheard of for someone of that notoriety, which basically says most agree with what's been said above. Mayweather's not getting endorsements means that nobody actually cares about him, which makes his PPV numbers even more astounding.

Floyd Mayweather, although he really shouldn't be, compared to past fighters who were the most important fighters in boxing, is the most important fighter/boxer in 2013. That is totally befuddling if you examine everything surrounding him in totality.

{youtube}ZHIhsLhQ-q8{/youtube}

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SouthPawFlo says:

Mayweather is bigger in pop culture than any other "athlete" in the world not just boxer...

The way he's put himself in the public eye and exposed his family entourage dynamic has captured the worlds attention since the Oscar Fight..

Even though he's not a KO artist, can anybody name the last fight that he wasn't in tip-top shape? When was his last "bad night?"

amayseng says:

Because 7/10 are complete idiots.

Look at the country, the economy, the youth and current parents.

7/10 are ignorant idiots.

No surprise at all.

Exciting? No.

Like I said. There were numerous casual fan complaints about Floyd marathoning it to a victory last fight

SouthPawFlo says:

Listen, what's more impressive a 1 punch KO, or 36mins of Dominance???

Floyd his popular because he's clearly the best in his sport and he's been that way for a long time.. Point blank period...

Radam G says:

Money May is not drawing crowds because he is popular. He is drawing them because hate sells. Money May has a lot of haters and they are intensively drawn to his fights hoping to see him beat or even robbed.

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Hatefulness has always got more butts in the seats than love, when it comes to real-life boxing. Exclusively coming to see a fighter because he has all the luv is a myth for the Big Screens. For the Big-Screen fights, 99 percent are coming to see Rocky Balboa win. In real live, 25 percent are watching to see Money May adroitly win. Seventy-five percent are watching and hoping for him to get beat.

It was the same way for the flashly fighters named above. For being at the top, it is often no luv. Holla!

Radam G says:

WTF! BTW! A one.punch knockout is more impressive. Don't get carry away. Holla!

Raiders says:

Wow I know this is viewed as a Pacquiao site but I've never seen a legitimate boxing writer say they don't like watching Floyd. It's not difficult, Floyd is the best of his generation, he has tricked casuals into thinking he's better than he is, but casuals only want the best. I remember when Mayweather-Pacquiao talk was at it's hottest, Teddy Atlas would be interviewed by ESPN anchors and they always said the same thing "let's talk about the only fight we want". You see casuals don't care about boxing they care about the big fights and at this point only Floyd gives it to them. Now I loved Rios-Alvarado but it had 800,000 viewers, Floyd is considered a failure because he had more people spend 60 bucks. With Pacquiao getting 700,000 buys against a guy like Clottey it just shows the USA likes the best and if you can talk than you are set. I've noticed a lot of internet fans basically want Rock em Sock em robots, sorry that's a style of boxing not all of boxing. My last thing is I'll say look at Rigo he does some of the best boxing I've seen and people thought he was running from the much bigger Donaire. The dumb people are the ones who think Floyd should stand in the pocket and trade.

Raiders says:

[QUOTE=Radam G;32232]WTF! BTW! A one-punch knockout is more impressive. Don't get carry away. Holla![/QUOTE]

You see it's taste, I've noticed people who enjoy Top Rank think everyone has their taste, to me Floyd and Rigo's boxing is more impressive than Randall Bailey or Lucas sparking a guy with one shot, it's like preferring fundamentals to dunking, I appreciate Knockouts but if I was only watching boxing for knockouts I don't think I'd love it, cause I could watch UFC for that

Radam G says:

Even Money May thinks one-punch kayos are most impressive. He is just not Bailey or Lucas. Every fighter prefers knocking out an opponent. If Money May could kayo every opponent, he would. Fans and fanfaronades don't get in the minds of great fighters. They fighters for themselves, not the crowd. Don't get the knocking out or the crowd cheering booing twisted. Holla!

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Raiders says:

[QUOTE=Radam G;32236]Even Money May thinks one-punch kayos are most impressive. He is just not Bailey or Lucas. Every fighter prefers knocking out an opponent. If Money May could kayo every opponent, he would. Fans and fanfaronades don't get in the minds of great fighters. The fighters fight for themselves not the crowd. Don't get the knocking out or the crowd cheering or booing twisted. Holla![/QUOTE]

Yeah if Floyd wanted to he could do much more damage and maybe more knockouts, if Floyd fought Canelo the way people wanted him to he'd be unconscious, knowing that one mistake could be defeat has an excitement to me. Floyd does have an ability to not care what people think that has gotten him far.

Carmine Cas says:

Floyd has mastered the game, you either love him or hate him but you pay to see him fight. And he always leaves us wanting more. Everyone wants different outcomes in the fights, I feel as though old school fans want to see a knock out and vice versa. I appreciate both, I'd prefer a happy median though lol. To Floyd this is all about business, he prefers to go in the ring and win efficiently and safely as possible. Yes everyone wants the knockout but with that comes risks obviously. This is the age of prize fighting, it's all about \$\$\$\$, not legacy and Floyd is the epitome if of it. Not all fighters abide by this though which is still good. Poor Oscar lol

Radam G says:

Amen! Not caring what people think or say, will get you a long, long way. Those know nothings can just shut da double up and pay. Da d@mn game, they don't know how to play. OKAY!
Holla!

amayseng says:

It just shows how low boxing is right now for Floyd to be its biggest star.

I truly enjoy Floyd's sharp punching and accuracy although I enjoy pacs sheer agility and destroying power more.

But think about it.

Who wouldn't prefer mike Tyson over Floyd? Prime vs prime.

Boxing just isn't the quality today it once was.

Radam G says:

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Wow! Hehehe! Amayseng, I don't know if boxing ever had one-type of quality. From my eyes, it has always been variety. One could always find what he or she likes. Holla!

amayseng says:

True Radam but look at the intensity and intrigue Tyson brought.

When's the last time an American hw was bringing any hype.

Look at today's hw division. Who is fascinating?

Radam G says:

Nobody. But Hisham Rahman Jr is making noise in the amateurs. And also one of ex-basketballer Dennis Rodman's Pinoy brothers is also blooming. This 15-year-old brother of Rodman is already 6-foot-3 and about 200-pounds.

Haters better eat their hearts out because the winds of Asia are storming. Holla!

Raiders says:

[QUOTE=amayseng;32248]It just shows how low boxing is right now for Floyd to be its biggest star.

I truly enjoy Floyd's sharp punching and accuracy although I enjoy pacs sheer agility and destroying power more.

But think about it.

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[QUOTE=amayseng;32270]True Radam but look at the intensity and intrigue Tyson brought.

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That's one division, I feel like we are so obsessed with the past we don't appreciate what we

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have: Donaire, Rigondeaux, Santa Cruz, Mares, Mikey, Floyd, Pacquiao, Canelo, Matthyse, Lara, Danny, Ward, Hopkins, Broner, Rios, Thurman, Crawford, Bradley, Alexander,GGG, Kovalev, Wilder, Periban, Figueroa, boxing is fine, the quality is great, we just dump on this generation, Mares and Santa Cruz would fit right in with the Mexican Trio and Pacquiao but we glorify the trio and Pacquiao and deny the ATG possibility of them.

Real Talk says:

I don't know what to say or feel.....part of me is like Floyd is throwing up the Satan sign and is a sellout and it's sad. GOD is telling me not to judge him because I'm about to go dump some construction debris in the roll-off right up the street because I really can't afford to pay for the dump fee because I under bid this job. I was pissed when I saw that pic and said I hope Canelo knockss his dick in the dirt which he most certainly will >=-) Blows that hurt cleanse away evil, Floyd you will be punished in the ring for what you have done so prepare yourself. Your day of reckoning has come. People say Canelo has no shot, I'm saying he's going to beat the breaks off of Mayweather and knock him out. Mayweather is slippery and can box but will be found and separated from his senses. Lights out Floyd. Dueces

Radam G says:

Wow! First it was SCLA Ali losing faith in Money May than Godly smashing him. Now it is Real Talk. WTF is going? Some types coast-to-coast Money May hate? I hope that the U.S. government hasn't release some type of experimental chemical on my Money May boys. How else has this abandoning of Money May come about by his loyalist fans? Holla!

amayseng says:

[QUOTE=Raiders;32298]That's one division, I feel like we are so obsessed with the past we don't appreciate what we have: Donaire, Rigondeaux, Santa Cruz, Mares, Mikey, Floyd, Pacquiao, Canelo, Matthyse, Lara, Danny, Ward, Hopkins, Broner, Rios, Thurman, Crawford, Bradley, Alexander,GGG, Kovalev, Wilder, Periban, Figueroa, boxing is fine, the quality is great, we just dump on this generation, Mares and Santa Cruz would fit right in with the Mexican Trio and Pacquiao but we glorify the trio and Pacquiao and deny the ATG possibility of them.[/QUOTE]

Unused the hw division as an example because Tyson had everyone buzzing for good reason as he was

just destroying everyone in exciting fashion.

Pacman was exciting for a period as well.

Floyd is dominating and razor sharp but his last fight with the ghost

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became boring as he hit and ran and ran and ran.

That's the truth.

I'm not hating I think Floyd could offer so much more but he is clearly

too concerned with taking a shot and stayed clear of the pocket the best he could.

So how is he the biggest star?

The reason he makes the most money is because like I mentioned 7/10 people are suckers

and fall for hating on him and paying to see him lose.

Real Talk says:

Aye Radam, It is what it is. I can not role with someone who rolls with the devil, period. I'll pray for him and I still love him but I'm not supporting that. I'm a fan of the sweet science and skills, period. I like Pacquiao as well and have the utmost respect for him being vocal about his faith and I know that's the real reason he got robbed in the Bradley fight for speaking out about being against homosexuality. When you become a friend of GOD you become an enemy of the world. Pacquiao got KO'd as karma for what he did in the past and he should not be boxing because the wrath of man works not the righteousness of GOD and his hands should be used to build and not destroy. That is why I'm not going to fight as much as I'd love to. Only for self defense and conditioning because I love the sweet science. Dueces P.S. Pacquiao K.O's Rios in China.

Raiders says:

[QUOTE=Radam G;32300]Wow! First it was SCLA Ali losing faith in Money May than Godly smashing him. Now it is Real Talk. WTF is going? Some types coast-to-coast Money May hate? I hope that the U.S. government hasn't release sometype of experimental chemical on my Money May boys. How else has this abandoning of Money May come about by his loyalist fans? Holla![/QUOTE]

I'm going to say what most people will never admit Floyd has fans, Manny has blind followers. I can be a fan of Floyd and truly hate his catchweight with Canelo. You will never hear a Pacquiao fan speak against his catchweights and why he turned down testing with Floyd but not Rios. Floyd fans are not crazed loyalists he's not a popular boxer among many fans.

Radam G says:

Money May and Da Manny have "fans" and "blind followers." Call a spade a spade and a groupie a groupie. Catchweight is BOXING! Not from Da Manny or Money May. You should know the long, long history of the sport, Raiders. Even these in-between pseudoweights came about because of catchweighting to may the best match for the BIG MONEY.

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C'mon, man. Don't let latent hatred blind your abilities to deal with reality of the actuality of the legal mayhem business.

The game is prizefighting, not pridefighting. If a called-by-the-fanfaronades-and-fanboys "catchweight" mean fighting a "catchweight," that is what you do. BTW, who in the heck coined that word? Holla!

Raiders says:

I actually know the history very well, but I'll say this there are 17 divisions now as opposed to 8, there is no need for catchweight any more especially when titles are involved. A catchweight between a light heavy and a middleweight at 168 when there was no super middleweight is not the same as Floyd or Manny telling Canelo and Cotto to lose two pounds to drain, it's a unnecessary stain.

amayseng says:

[QUOTE=Real Talk;32303]Aye Radam, It is what it is. I can not role with someone who rolls with the devil, period. I'll pray for him and I still love him but I'm not supporting that. I'm a fan of the sweet science and skills, period. I like Pacquiao as well and have the utmost respect for him being vocal about his faith and I know that's the real reason he got robbed in the Bradley fight for speaking out about being against homosexuality. When you become a friend of GOD you become an enemy of the world. Pacquiao got KO'd as karma for what he did in the past and he should not be boxing because the wrath of man works not the righteousness of GOD and his hands should be used to build and not destroy. That is why I'm not going to fight as much as I'd love to. Only for self defense and conditioning because I love the sweet science. Dueces P.S. Pacquiao K.O's Rios in China.[/QUOTE]

If its what you love you should fight as a competitor.

Boxing is a competition.

A competitive nature is different than wanting to ruin someone for life.

Good overall post though.

Radam G says:

@Raiders, actually there are now 22 weight divisions nowadays. But whatever the fighters agree to is okay. Contact agreements are now how the whole world and sports roll, not just boxing.

And it should be the fighters' call what crooked catchweight that they agree upon. Not the crooked one that the alphabet sanctioning organization made. They get their sanctioning fee, regardless. So jive 'em. Holla!

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tlig says:

I'm only just seeing this article and to be fair it asks a lot of questions I've found myself asking. But I think comparing Floyd to Ali, Leonard and even Tyson misses the point. We live in very different times to those guys and Floyd for many years was promoted with the aim of him reaching that status of crossover personality with very little success. But he - to his credit- kept winning and got to the point where people could no longer ignore him as everyone else fell of, got old or retired (remember he shared p4p lists with Jones Jr, Trininad, Mosely etc back in the late 90s?).

But more than anything else I think Reality TV is what finally broke him. Those HBO 24/7 specials were a God-send and he took the chance and made it his own to keep. Asking why Floyd is boxing's biggest star is like asking why Kim Kardashian is so famous. These are different times I'm afraid and the reason people tuned in to watch an Ali or a Leonard isn't the same as to why people watch Floyd fight. Heck I don't even believe it's the same type of boxing fans!

This is the age of instant celebrity, instant news, twitter, facebook etc....Tyson didn't have that!

Real Talk says:

@Amayseng, not my will but HIS be done. I came very close to fighting for money in the height of the recession to feed my family but everything worked out, but I'm not going to knock those who do. I would love to do it but the LORD does not want me to so I won't. Dueces

amayseng says:

Much respect Real Talk.