

What Boxing Loses if Manny Pacquiao Loses

Written by Aaron Lowinger
Thursday, 03 April 2014 17:11



Boxing is the cruelest sport. It demands near constant mental discipline and blissful - if not completely driven by superstition - ignorance of fear. And when your jig is up, you can't resort to being a role player on a team, instead you get beaten violently in front of millions.

Even champions face the blues.

Four years after the champ had surrendered his belt to Sonny Liston, and right after he had failed to regain it for a second time from Muhammad Ali, Floyd Patterson wrote that “the losing fighter loses more than just his pride and the fight; he loses part of his future, [and] is one step closer to the slum he came from.”

In this case the slum is Sarangani Province in the Phillipines.

There's a lot more on the line on April 12 when Manny Pacquiao rematches Timothy Bradley Jr. than his own career, the business of boxing as we know it hangs in the balance. Sometimes a hotly contested loss doesn't hurt a fighter's future (see Ali-Frazier 1, or Bradley-Provodnikov just a year ago), but with the Filipino's age and his considerable ring mileage, a loss could very well mean the end to his imaginable possibilities as a top draw.

The Sweet Science has not yet recovered from the loss of the line of great American

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heavyweight champions from John L. Sullivan through Mike Tyson who transcended the boundaries of sport into the epic arena of life and death bearing millions of gaping witnesses. Perhaps as boxing's phoenix is slowly shaking off the ashes, the dark period between Tyson's very public self-destruction and now will be defined by television gridlock and the Filipino fist of Manny Pacquiao. Pacquiao's career carries the potential of bridging the sport over its self-inflicted pitfalls into another era, as long as his career can survive another year or two.

Fans have gravitated to Pacquiao like dense satellites to the largest sun; attracted by his high-wattage smile, his lethal exuberance in and out of the ring, and his incredible story. If it could be said of the fictional *Rocky*, that "his whole life was a million-to-one shot," let's pit Manny's odds against the population of his homeland and say his whole life was 100 million-to-one shot. Pacman's rise from GenSan street urchin peddling cigarettes and doughnuts and eating one meal a day when lucky to champion boxer across eight weight classes has allowed boxing to sell its most compelling story. It's through personalities like Pacquiao that the often illusory American dream has become globalized and gives boxing a lead foot into every slum in the world.

By maintaining his presence as a top ten pound-for-pound fighter, his narrative survives to spur the growth of boxing worldwide. When Pacquiao leaves the ring for the last time, his example will continue to live on for future boxers but the attention he brings to the sport will fade until another man is able to claim that spotlight.

As it stands now, Floyd Mayweather is boxing's money ring king, but Pacquiao represents the sport's heart and soul, the Hollywood narrative of a fighter from nothing achieving the infinite. Coverage of the Congressman attracts more internet traffic than any other fighter by a wide margin, and this interest and capital drives attention broadly to all participants of the Sweet Science. Given his worldwide fame and rising political career in the Philippines, boxing needs Manny Pacquiao more than Pacquiao needs boxing.

The controversy surrounding the judging the first time Bradley and Pacquiao can't be held against the American, who has since acquitted himself expertly in two radically different wins over Provodnikov and Manny's nemesis Márquez. It's not a knock on Bradley's person to suggest that he's incapable of assuming the Filipino's stature, while the number of young stars in boxing has increased in the last few years, not one will be able to pick up Pacquiao's torch if it falls now. By winning now, he would bide the sport a little more time to generate new interest.

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At 35 years old and without a knockout victory since 2009, many observers have credible doubt whether the home run hitter's erstwhile pop will ever go yard again. Pacman's trainer Freddie Roach has taken on his usual prefight mantra of knocking the other man out, but this time around there's an underlying desperation. It's a tall order against a champion with a proven chin like Bradley's, but Pacquiao needs a signature win if he wants to again lay claim to being the top fighter in the world and set up another two or three fights.

This Bradley fight has shades of 2008's "Dream Match" between Pacquiao and Oscar De La Hoya. The age differential is strikingly similar but Pacquiao has switched places. In 2008, Pacquiao was younger, smaller, and hungrier man and De La Hoya was already more comfortable wearing a suit and fronting Golden Boy Promotions. Like De La Hoya then, the Congressman has a full life outside of boxing that includes possible presidential aspirations, while Timothy Bradley is only a boxer.

That night almost six years ago, Pacquiao cemented his legacy by ending the career of one of the very best. Bradley looks to accomplish the same. In retrospect, it was good for the business of boxing for De La Hoya to fall then to Manny, but it's much harder to make the argument now in Bradley's favor. Chances are even that whatever purse Bradley earns for the rematch, win or lose, it will represent his career's high water mark. Giving Pacquiao the exit stage left will spell the end of big money Manny fight cards and would adversely affect the sport's attraction in real dollars.

With his own career at something of a tipping point, it should follow that the sport Manny Pacquiao has carried on his back for the past ten years arrives at the same uncertain place. Whether Manny's career ends this month or not, boxing needs to capitalize on its current momentum by making great fights or it will slide further out of mind.

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Radam G says:

NOTHING! But Da Manny will not lose. Holla!

jzzy says:

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I saw Bradley's media day workout. he didn't look sharp and appeared a little bulked up. Manny will not lose. Bradley will be hit hard and often.

gibola says:

Agree that Pacman has been marvellous for the game and it will be sad to lose him as a world class fighter when that happens. I think this Bradley rematch will be a close decision either way and both will go on to more high-profile fights. What we will miss most is the fearless choice of opponents by Pacman - apart from PBF, the fighters that he should have fought, he fought. His fights have always been entertaining and he hasn't dragged the game into the gutter like Broner. We take it for granted him fighting Marquez, Morales, Barrera, Hatton, ODLH, Bradley, etc. He's never bitched about weights, venues and dollars to the extent that it stopped fights getting made. When he's gone and the big fights don't happen quite so often, that's what we'll miss.

Radam G says:

Stiff-punching Bradley didn't look good in the media day workout, because he was trying to hard, power punch. The whole Team Bradley has lost it.

Bradley is now saying that he will knock out Da Manny with a left hook. YUP, RIGHT! NYET!

Big Foot's punches are dragging and are without snap, crackle, pop! He has already mentally worn himself out a week before the bout talking delusional syet.

Dude believes that he has psyched Da Manny out, remindful of Young Cassius Clay-Sonny Liston. Pac-spies are everywhere feeding the Cali Cranium's bizarre behavior to Team Pac and Posse Pac and shrinks.

Believe me or NOT! But Bradley and his trainer Joel Diaz are having mental breakdowns. They cannot handle da pressure of the truelight of the limelight.

Hulkquez/Marquez's trainer Nacho Beristain claims that Bambi Bradley has lost three bouts in a row. On that I don't know. I believe Sir Big Foot got a gift and lift. And against Marquez a winning shift. Though against a SHOT, zombie-fied Marquez.

Bradley actually believe that he is channeling the young Cassius Clay/GOAT Ali and will turn Da Manny into an angry, swinging Sonny "Night Train" Liston on the night of Bout II.

Dud! I don't think so. Big Foot has already been practicing his display celebration of: "I SHOCK da WIIIRLLLLLDDDD -- AGAIN!...I'm great too. Give it up to me...."

YUP, RIGHT, bonehead! Okay! You will be KTFO COLD or bytch crying.

Dude is going to have "The eye of the deer."

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He will get into a thousand-yard-stare trap of Da Manny's on-coming, blazing-in shots, missiles and nukes. And like a trapped-in-the-oncoming-car's headlights deer, Big Foot pukes. And KaBOOM! FINISHED!

This time around, Bradley officially LOSES. Holla!

Grimm says:

Boxing will be good. The nature of the sport guarantee an influx of interest, and the nature of humans guarantee that every void is filled - if not with a true replacement, at least a replacement that the fans in their own minds dresses with the necessary attributes. The most vocal advocates for boxings presumed death doesn't seem to realise that hammering home evidence of that death is the opposite: evidence of its presence and undisputable status. No matter if virtually no one would be watching future fights, the sports place within the collective mind of society is unique - be it in movies, literature or among some fellows talking smack over a beer.

When the world of MMA want to establish itself as the toughest act on the planet, the comparison goes to boxing - because boxing is the mother of tough acts, beyond being just an act. When white collar dudes want to connect to their lost selves, they turn to boxing, believing they can get hold of some of the magic that surrounds the sport and give its practitioners an aura of extraterrestrial abilities. When women gasp at the sight of men battering each other senseless better than anyone else, its boxers they gasp at. They all should.

Manny Pacquiao is unique, an icon, in the way that only Muhammad Ali was. Not even Leonard was close to the global status of Congressman Pacquiao; a status that requires incredible skill, but where skill is far from enough. Its what they represent. But both Alis and Pacquiaos relevance for the lives of millions of people have more to do with the holes in the souls of those people, than with boxing. Boxing will be good. Its the world that will and should miss Manny Pacquiao the day he no longer does his thing in the ring.

Skibbz says:

[QUOTE=Grimm;48270]Boxing will be good. The nature of the sport guarantee an influx of interest, and the nature of humans guarantee that every void is filled - if not with a true replacement, at least a replacement that the fans in their own minds dresses with the necessary attributes. The most vocal advocates for boxings presumed death doesn't seem to realise that hammering home evidence of that death is the opposite: evidence of its presence and undisputable status. No matter if virtually no one would be watching future fights, the sports place within the collective mind of society is unique - be it in movies, literature or among some fellows talking smack over a beer.

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That was a pleasure to read Grimm. Thanks.

Grimm says:

Thank you, Skibbz.

Domenic says:

Pacquiao's legacy is already cemented. Boxing wins when he's on center stage, no matter the outcome.

deepwater2 says:

MP, the fighter of the decade conducts himself in such a manner that even when he loses he doesn't really lose. He is a class act the way Derek Jeter is a class act. He is a fine representative of the sport and conducts himself like a man. When he is gone he will be missed.

The Commish says:

If Manny Pacquiao loses next Saturday night, you've got to figure that'll be it for him...and that's regardless of how he loses. Whether he gets KO'd, TKO'd, loses a one-sided decision or a close decision, I cannot see him going on any further.

If he retires, boxing will lose one of its active future Hall-of-Famers. Pac-Man has given us one thrill after another. We have watched him move up something like nine weight classes over the last decade and win championships in one weight class after another. Can you picture That's the same as a lightweight moving through the ranks and eventually winning the heavyweight championship of the world.

Manny Pacquiao transcends boxing. Non-boxing fans approach me at the huge gym where I work as a Personal Trainer and ask me questions about Pacquiao. I have had dozens of people ask me about Manny. Nobody has asked me anything about Timothy Bradley.

That kind of stuff shows me just how popular the Congressman from the Phillipines really is.

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How much will boxing lose if Pacquiao loses next week? Boxing will lose plenty.

Timothy Bradley is a good guy...a real good guy. But Manny Pacquiao is perhaps the biggest name in the sport. Yes, bigger than Floyd Mayweather.

A loss for Pacquiao is a loss for boxing.

-Randy G.

Skibbz says:

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-Randy G.[/QUOTE]

I agree with all that you say but for the point on it being the end of the road for Manny. I would certainly hope not, and if I was to put myself in Manny's shoes.. I would guess that he would want to leave off the back of a win rather than a loss, be it to JMM or anyone else of similar calibre.

I don't think he's the type of fighter to call and end to it after such a loss, surely his fans and the world of boxing will get behind him to urge him forward into a comeback. I may be wrong, but I certainly hope i'm not.

brownsugar says:

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To me the sport of boxing is like a living organism. There is always going to be a dying off and renewal process when the great ones leave. What Paq has released into the into the boxing universe will be recycled and resurrected by at least one of the thousands of young fighters who joined the game because of his influence. The vacancy he leaves will be filled by those he inspired. Its the way its always been after those who've carried the torch decide its time to depart.....the torch is handed down to the next generation... That guy is probably some kid entering a gym for the first time and through the course of his first sparring session discoverd that he has something special to give inside the ring. The parting of Manny shouldn't be treated like the Funeral of Boxing... It should be celebrated and embraced for the contribution his legacy will continue to provide, long after he's gone.

Skibbz says:

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Great post BrownSugar. If I had a glass in my hand I would raise it. I think you're exactly right. And one of those kids will follow in the footsteps of Manny and treat us to some great and unforgettable ups and downs.

Those who say boxing is dying don't know how deep it runs in the veins of the many.

Skibbz says:

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Great post BrownSugar. If I had a glass in my hand I would raise it. I think you're exactly right. And one of those kids will follow in the footsteps of Manny and treat us to some great and unforgettable ups and downs.

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Those who say boxing is dying don't know how deep it runs in the veins of the many.

The Shadow says:

"The vacancy he leaves will be filled by phone he inspired." - brownsugar

the Roast says:

[QUOTE=The Shadow;48315]"The vacancy he leaves will be filled by phone he inspired." - brownsugar[/QUOTE]

Like with a smart phone. Brilliant!

The Shadow says:

[QUOTE=the Roast;48318]Like with a smart phone. Brilliant![/QUOTE]

Oh my goodness, I didn't even see that! Blame that damn autocorrect.

*those he inspired. My apologies for perverting your pensive pennings, Sugar. I'm truly sorry.

Nevertheless, I'll let the comment stay untouched and unedited. It may qualify for earnings.

the Roast says:

[QUOTE=The Shadow;48327]Oh my goodness, I didn't even see that! Blame that damn autocorrect.

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Nevertheless, I'll let the comment stay untouched and unedited. It may qualify for earnings.[/QUOTE]

brownsugar says:

[QUOTE=The Shadow;48315]"The vacancy he leaves will be filled by phone he inspired." - brownsugar[/QUOTE]

Thanks for the good laugh Shadow....hilarious...
.damn all you lousy spell checker applications to hell.
Deep has complained many times about the same issue.
Lol

leon30001 says:

Boxing will lose one of the greatest fighters of all time, and the best of this era.

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The Good Doctor says:

[QUOTE=leon30001;48359]Boxing will lose one of the greatest fighters of all time, and the best of this era.[/QUOTE]

Would you call me crazy if I thought Hop was the best of this era?

The Shadow says:

[QUOTE=The Good Doctor;48398]Would you call me crazy if I thought Hop was the best of this era?[/QUOTE]

Better than Manny to me though Manny is more exciting, explosive, dynamic and commercially attractive.

deepwater2 says:

[QUOTE=The Good Doctor;48398]Would you call me crazy if I thought Hop was the best of this era?[/QUOTE]

Nope not crazy . Hopkins is right up there but just a little short. The fighter of the decade wiped out the Super featherweight Mexican champions which no one could of imagined. Then cleaned out jr welterweights , then retired margocheato a huge welter no one one would fight(talking to you Floyd) and stopped cotto. Hopkins had his great moments . Losing to Roy ,jermain Taylor, bad chad and Joe C nothing to be ashamed of but takes Bernard a step below PAC in my opinion.

Carmine Cas says:

Great posts by Grimm and B-Sug, boxing will be fine. MP has contributed a lot to the sport and he will be greatly missed but we have witnessed great champions before him, all with genuine presences in the sport depart. Life goes on and so will boxing, but I also think Manny won't leave without a W

leon30001 says:

[QUOTE]Would you call me crazy if I thought Hop was the best of this era? [/QUOTE]

Yeah but Hopkins is what, 87? 89? He's been in the last several eras so it's not a fair comparison! I'll put it like this; I first started following boxing in earnest somewhere around 1998-99...in the Hopkins, Joppy, Holmes and soon-to-be Trinidad middleweight era...and Bernard was old THEN!

King Beef says:

Boxing will be fine; it may even be a blessing in disguise. It may cause that next budding

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star/stars to step up and fill the void, hell we may even get lucky and get the cross organizational fights that will keep boxing alive and ticking.