

Freddie Roach Assesses Manny's Effort, Bradley's Calf Excuse

Written by Michael Woods
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Freddie Roach on Monday morning, after he'd slept on it, gave his guy Manny Pacquiao high marks for doing his thing against Timothy Bradley at the MGM in Las Vegas on Saturday night.

"It was a good fight," Coach Roach told me, on the phone, while working with Miguel Cotto at Wild Card, counting down to the Puerto Rican's June test against Sergio Martinez in NYC, at MSG. "The first part of the fight was pretty even, I had it 3-3, but Manny was pretty much dominant the last six rounds."

Roach said Pacman complained to him, around round five, of cramps in his legs, but Roach told him to get over that, keep using the legs, keep on his toes, don't stay static and let Bradley land a lucky bomb. Manny complied.

The Twitter Einsteins and fightwriters who think they have more knowledge and strategic smarts than the Roach's of the world are saying, here and there, that I told ya so, Manny's power is gone, his power is absent. Roach touched on this. He noted, first off, that NOBODY has stopped Bradley, so Manny is in good company in that regard. But he also admitted that Pacman did have more noticeable power at 135, and that when he's fighting welterweights, his gamechangers aren't so game-changing.

Roach and I talked about Bradley, his effort, and his choice to announce to the world, in his in-the-ring postfight chat with Max Kellerman, that his calf betrayed him early, and that messed him up. Later, at the postfight presser, he said he wanted to give Manny full credit. Er, that's well and good...but throwing that non-excuse excuse at Max after the decision was announced was disingenous, if he truly wanted to let Manny's effort shine, without smudging it with explanatories. "That calf stuff, was it BS? Well, I'm not sure anyone can fight with a torn calf,"

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Roach said. "And I'm not so sure Bradley is such a tough guy, he's in a wheelchair too often. I got him socks this time, I might get him calf brace next," Roach said, good naturedly, clearly joshing a bit. "But nobody goes in to a fight 100 percent, they all have injuries and so forth, so....Then at the press conference, he didn't want to talk about it, but then he does to the right person."

Freddie knows talking trash, talking smash, stirring the pot, is part and parcel of bringing attention to the fight. So he wasn't offended, he said, with Bradley and Joel Diaz' smack-talking before the bout. He did wonder, he told me, if Diaz was trying to get into his head, under his skin, when he went to the Pacman locker room before the main event on Saturday, and apologizing to Manny, and Manny alone, for perhaps taking the talk too far.

"But no big deal," Roach said. "Talking s--t is part of the game. Even I say stuff. It's just selling tickets, it's nothing personal."

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