

King And Arum Best Buddies In NYC; Is This A Bold New Era Of Promoter Civility?

Written by Michael Woods

Wednesday, 19 January 2011 16:48

photo by David Martin Warr taken at BB King's IN NYC on Jan. 19

Anyone who follows politics knows that we are, or we may be, in a new era of civility. After the January 8th shooting rampage in Tucson, Arizona, in which a US Congresswomen was shot, and a Federal judge and five others were killed by a mentally ill man, calls for less strident and vitriolic rhetoric in the political arena have so far resulted in a less charged atmosphere.

This was in my head as I attended the Wednesday press conference in New York for the Match 12 pay per view show headlined by WBA junior middleweight champion Miguel Cotto (38-2 with 28 KOs; age 30), who will glove up with the fight game's model of incivility, the Nicaraguan trash talker extraordinaire, Ricardo Mayorga (29-7, with 23 KOs; been KO'd four times; age 37). The civility subject popped up because this promotion marks the first time since 2006 (Floyd Mayweather-Zab Judah) that Bob Arum (Cotto's promoter) and Don King (Mayorga's promoter) have co promoted an event.

The two sagacious lions of the promotion business had nothing but kind words for each other at BB King's. Mayorga, though, didn't get the memo on the new deal of kindness. He promised that March 12 would be Cotto's "wake" and asked the Puerto Rican hitter to exit the game after this scrap, to save his mother from having to witness another pummeling.

Check that...maybe Mayorga did get the memo. He quite likely recalled that Miguel's father died a year ago, and in a show of decency, made sure to tell all in attendance that he respected Cotto as a person. Not so as a fighter, he went on to say. Maybe the memo got cut off, maybe it got sent via Twitter? (Follow Editor Mike on Twitter @Woodsy1069).

Mayorga predicted that he'd knock out Cotto within four rounds, a call I cannot fathom. That's not to say that I see Mayorga as being a pushover for Cotto. Not so; I agree with Manny Steward that Cotto best be in top shape, and take the wildman seriously. For a cigarette addict who has to be convinced to give up his beer intake during training, Mayorga has ample stamina, and he will without a doubt storm Cotto, press him, look to land a prayer of a punch against a guy who has been stopped twice, by Margarito and then Pacquiao. (Check back later tonight; I'll post video of Mayorga's entire amusing set).

Arum chatted up the press before the press conference began. He said that King is a "character" and "one of the all-time great" promoters.

Every time they co promote, he said, it's been a delight. "Why we haven't worked together more I just don't know," he said.

King was similarly jovial; he said during his time at the mike that he is looking forward to having

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his guy win, so he could "walk away with a smile and say, 'I got him again.'"

The Las Vegas-based promoter during his informal chats was upbeat when talking about the May 7 Manny Pacquiao-Shane Mosley showdown. He said that he'd be able to sell three times as many seats as will be available at the MGM Grand. "It's gonna be a real home run," he said. (I will soon post a video interview I did with Arum in which he talks about the choice of Mosley as a foe.)

He also stated that if Julio Cesar Chavez gets past Billy Lyell on Jan. 29, he will match up Chavez against Sebastian Zbik, who was just handed the WBC middleweight belt after that organization took it from Sergio Martinez for not fighting his mandatory.

Arum also said that he will find out for himself if Kelly Pavlik's woes are behind him, that his stint in the Betty Ford clinic for alcohol issues did the job. If Arum sees a healthy Pavlik, the Youngstowner might fight on the Pacman undercard.

Also, Arum still holds out hope for a Pacquiao-Mayweather scrap. The promoter said that there might be some clarity in regards to Mayweather's multiple legal issues early next week.

A more sure bet is a Cotto-Antonio Margarito rematch, if Cotto does the expected against Mayorga. Arum was asked if Cotto might like a crack at Sergio Martinez, but he said the Puerto Rican would likely target Margarito. "We sell fights the public is willing to buy," he said, mentioning that Martinez doesn't have the name recognition that Margarito does.

Arum defended the choice of Mosley over Marquez a bit, saying that Marquez hasn't proved himself at higher weight classes, while Manny has mastered welterweight, and above.

SPEEDBAG Yuri Foreman will test his knee, which was repaired surgically last June, on the undercard. The ex 154 pound champ was showing his his new baby, flashing cell phone pics to his last foe, Miguel Cotto, and Cotto's trainer Manny Steward. Foreman, with a repaired ACL, will take on ultra busy Pawel Wolak, another Top Rank scrapper. They've trained together at Gleasons in Brooklyn, and are quite friendly. "The knee is good," the Park Slope resident quipped. "The doctor told me I'd not be as good a dancer, but that I'll be an OK boxer." He's better than that; Steward called him one of the best technical boxers of his time when talking about Cotto's summer win in Yankee Stadium over Foreman.

---King called the writers in the room "boss scribes." Gotta say, I liked that...

--Christy Martin (49-5) looked in fine form, especially considering on Nov. 23, she was stabbed and shot by her husband Jim. He's been charged with attempted murder and a trial is set for May. The 42-year-old Martin, nicknamed "The Cole Miner's Daughter," was shadowed by attorney Gloria Allred, who specializes in matters of discrimination, often times when women have been the victim of domestic abuse. High profile clients have included Amber Frey, girlfriend to murderer Scott Peterson; the family of Nicole Brown Simpson during OJ Simpson's murder trial and Rachel Uchitel, who tabloids say dated Tiger Woods. The nature of Allred's alliance with Martin isn't clear at this point. Martin meets 9-8 Dakota Stone on March 12. She

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said she was looking forward to getting back into a title picture, and looking like she was in mid 90s form. Martin didn't address the rumor which ran on TMZ that said her husband snapped when she told him she was now in a romantic situation with someone named "Sherry."

--King gave some love to Allred, who he said is a fearsome foe to male chauvinists, many whom would be keen to keep women "fat, pregnant, over the stove and cooking."

---One element of the press conference that stood out for me, beyond the fact that Mayorga didn't start a scuffle, was the presence of the CEO of Showtime, Matt Blank. We chatted for a couple of minutes before the festivities started, and he impressed me with a down to earth attitude. He used "engagement cues" more often with me than you'd expect such a titan of industry to use. Seriously, his presence sent a strong signal that Showtime is committed to boxing, and probably tells us that the HBO-Arum gulf is a bit deeper than some might think.

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FighterforJC says:

Being as old and close to death as Arum and King are, I hope this show of civility is sincere. I hope that they can spend their last years working together to put on the fights that we'd like to see (Pacquiao Mayweather). As crooked as these guys are, they put on some of the greatest shows in boxing history. When King and Arum are gone, I shudder at the thought of Goldenboy being the main guy. It will be horrible, absolutely horrible. DLH will singlehandedly destroy the sport. He cannot separate business from juvenile, personal grudges.

Radam G says:

The WiliLEAKS's scoop about Riccardo Mayorga has turned him into a wuss -- or maybe choirboy behavior. Normally Mayorga would be cussing Miguel Cotto out, talking about his mama and saying crazy stuff about Miguel's late father. Mayorga would be as rude as heck trying to get into Miguel's head. The WiliLEAKS's TRUTH can really chump a chump. Only the awesome hookup of the game got Mayorga a shot at another title. This sucka has lost four of his last eight bouts, and was knocked out in three of them. He has not been in the legit top 10 since 2003. Every flicking time shortly before he is getting a title shot, one of the corrupted sanctioning organization powers that be gives him a top spot in the ranking.

Radam G says:

Danggit! I was too quick on the lips. And by my tongue, Ricky Mayorga made me slip. I should have known that this sucka was going to start floppin' his lips. Dat sucka started hummin' harder than Gladys Knight and dat Pips. Wow! He talked about Miguel Cotto's mother and the whole nine. MC is going to probably give him an arse-thrashing devine. That Mayorga really knows how to get on his clown. Soon could not come soon enough for da MC-RM throwdown. Holla!

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