

## Mayorga Talks Good Fight, Can He Fight One?

Written by Rick Folstad

Thursday, 20 January 2011 14:55

---

photo courtesy Chris Farina/Top Rank, taken at end of Cotto-Mayorga press conference in Puerto Rico on Thursday

For a guy who was 4-4 in his last eight fights, Ricardo Mayorga sure can talk a good fight. The question is, can he still deliver one.

He was pretty good at backing up his mouth five or six years ago. He'd insult a guy, tell us it was going to be an easy fight, than go out and thump him in three or four rounds. It was like a prophesy or a promise. How do you argue with a guy who kept his word?

But that was a few years ago, back when he kept regular gym hours and fought two or three times a year. He was also a little younger, which is always a big plus to a fighter unless your last name is Holyfield or Hopkins.

Mayorga is neither. He's more Don Rickles, only he's not as nice.

You could tolerate the old Mayorga because he was good enough to be a world champion, which is pretty big stuff in anybody's book. And you could always tune out the trash talking if you got bored with it, and just watched the fighter do the work instead of his busy mouth. It was easier that way.

But if you are choosing to talk trash, you better win. And that might be a growing problem for Mayorga, who will face Miguel Cotto on March 12 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas for Cotto's WBA super-welterweight title.

If he played it smart, Mayorga would shut up and concentrate on getting into the best shape a 37-year-old can get in.

But that's not Mayorga. His big mouth and his cutting insults are as much a part of his training regimen as roadwork and sparring. If he didn't have someone to bad-mouth, I think he'd quit the fight game and wither up and die.

He's already started working on Cotto. He called him a woman and teased him about his small hands at a press conference in New York on Wednesday announcing the fight, which will be co-promoted by Bob Arum (Top Rank) and Don King.

"I'm going to use Cotto as my red carpet to open the door to even bigger fights," Mayorga said. "Cotto was quoted in Puerto Rico saying it was the 'lie of the year,' when I said I would fight him. It looks like he had bad information as the so-called lie has become a reality."

Pretty tame stuff for Mayorga, but he did mention that Cotto's fans would be "wearing black" on March 12 for Cotto's wake. And let's be honest. It's still pretty early in this fight. Mayorga is just

## Mayorga Talks Good Fight, Can He Fight One?

Written by Rick Folstad

Thursday, 20 January 2011 14:55

---

warming up with his pocket full of slurs.

“I see fear in your eyes,” he told Cotto, who could stare down Freddy Krueger.

Or there was this little zinger from Mayorga: “Hold my belt and polish it for me. I’ll pick it up in March.”

Now that’s funny.

While Mayorga has already jump started his game plan to get inside Cotto’s head, it might be a futile effort. Cotto has never been one to let trash-talking get in the way of a good fight.

“No one wins with their mouth,” he said. “You’re a clown and your whole career is a joke.”

Not bad for someone who doesn’t like to hold long conversations.

If there is a question surrounding this fight, it might be how did an unranked Mayorga get a title shot? I don’t think it was based on Mayorga’s recent “big” win over some guy named Michael Walker, who was 19-5-1 when he was stopped by Mayorga in the ninth round last month. It was Mayorga’s only fight in more than two years. I guess that’s all it takes to get a title shot when you’ve got two of the best promoters in the fight game working on the same side, and you’re being promoted by one of them.

“Ricardo Mayorga is my enigma,” King said at the press conference. “But I have always believed in his abilities. He’s soared to great heights and he is poised to soar again.”

Arum, who promotes Cotto, saw the fight in a different light.

“Top Rank is delighted to give Miguel Cotto an opportunity to do a demolition job on Ricardo Mayorga,” Arum said.

Sometimes a fight just sounds good.

[Comment on this article](#)