

Written by Eric Raskin
Monday, 25 April 2011 08:25



Did we really just get through a weekend without a Fight of the Year candidate? And did I also make it through a week without receiving any emails worth printing? Yes and yes. But I did receive a short-and-sweet Twitter question worth answering (it was intended for the “Tough Questions” segment on Ring Theory, but we didn’t use it there), so let’s kick off the column with that:

Who is greater: Bernard Hopkins or Floyd Mayweather?

—@fishandchips111

This is an interesting twist on the more typical questions either measuring Mayweather against Manny Pacquiao or Hopkins against Roy Jones. And it forces me to define the term “greater.” Some people don’t understand the distinction between “better” and “greater,” but it’s very

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important here.

In their primes, if you could make them the exact same size, I think I would say Mayweather was better. Not by a lot, mind you, but if you're forcing me to pick a winner in that fight, with his amazing reflexes and near flawless technique, I like Floyd on points. That does not, however, make Mayweather greater. This too is a close call, but if their respective careers ended today, I'd rank Hopkins above Mayweather among the all-time greats.

I had the pleasure of spending some quality time with Hopkins at the Joe Hand Boxing Gym in Philadelphia this weekend, and somehow, at age 46, the man is still motivated primarily by the pursuit of greatness. Let's say, hypothetically, that he's the 37th greatest boxer of all-time right now; the notion that defeating Jean Pascal for the lineal light heavyweight championship to become the oldest ever to win a real title could move him up to, say, 35th, is something that actually drives him. I don't know if I've ever met an athlete as obsessed with his legacy as Hopkins is. Some people would point to Michael Jordan, but I submit that MJ's unparalleled obsession was with winning, not with his legacy. Otherwise, he wouldn't have retired in his absolute prime in '93 and again at the tail end of his prime in '98.

And while continuing to make history and add to his legacy is Hopkins' main motivation, Mayweather's motivations are making money, being famous, and keeping his undefeated record. I wonder how differently Mayweather's career might have turned out if he'd dropped a random four-round split decision early in his career and didn't have that zero at the end of his record to protect. But he does have the zero, and I'm not the first writer to opine that it's steered him away from a few potentially compelling fights over the years.

Mayweather's abilities may leave us in awe more often than Hopkins' do. But Hopkins has more accomplishments that we'll tell our grandkids about, more one-of-a-kind achievements. That's a huge part of greatness, doing things that have never (or almost never) been done before. If Mayweather retires undefeated, that's a rare accomplishment that will appear in the first paragraph of his obituary. But it's pretty much the only one. How many first-paragraph accomplishments has he not even tried for because of his pursuit of that singular achievement?

I have a feeling the email inbox will be more loaded next week, now that I've given the Mayweather lovers some ammo. In the meantime, let's get to the weekly Rants:

- Well, HBO, you can take perverse pleasure in knowing that the "24/7" series fully jumped the shark when Showtime started producing it. I don't want to call Saturday's episode of "Fight Camp 360" boring, but let's just say the Kardashians expressed disappointment about what's become of the reality-TV genre. I believe Khloe's exact quote was, "What does Shane Mosley do that makes him famous?"
- Just how bad was Episode Two of FC360? I'd rather sit through a 24-hour "Show Me Da Manny" marathon than re-watch those 20 minutes.
- If you're looking for my commentary on the Vic Darchinyan-Yonhhy Perez result, I can't top what my Ring Theory partner Bill Dettloff wrote on Twitter: "If Vic Darchinyan were any better at

RASKIN'S RANTS: B-Hop, Money May, J-Geezy & Triple-M (Mystery Meat McCloskey)

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making me look like a moron, he'd be my wife."

- Maybe this isn't fair, but I'm a little less impressed with Joseph Agbeko's boxing display against Perez than I was a week ago.
- Just when I thought my distaste for Gus Johnson was maxed out, he goes and calls Jim Gray "J-Geezy." If Dick Vitale and Stephen A. Smith had a baby ... that baby would find Johnson spectacularly annoying.
- Did Teddy Atlas really lump George Foreman's loss to Muhammad Ali in with famous pugilistic quit-jobs?
- Speaking of Big George, when Yuri Foreman starts having kids, do you think he'll name them all Yuri?
- I have a tendency to complain sometimes about being overworked. Remind me never to complain to Kevin Rooney Jr. about it.
- Yeah, I admit it. I cried like a baby during the Paco Rodriguez E:60 feature.
- My only beef with the Rodriguez piece was the repeated references to Rodriguez vs. Teon Kennedy being a "title fight" or a "championship fight." I know it was for a regional belt, but honestly, did it add anything to the drama to deceive people about what the fight meant? And on a related note, the blurb on the ESPN.com home page opened with, "Paco Rodriguez was on his way to greatness." Can we please just tell a good story with a little journalistic integrity and stop making crap up? Maybe 99 percent of your audience doesn't know any better; show a little respect for the one percent that does.
- How outstanding was Breidis Prescott's quote referring to Paul McCloskey as "mystery meat"? Whatever kind of meat he is, it's definitely not dark meat. When McCloskey had his shirt off and started bleeding against Amir Khan, I was sure he was auditioning for a role in one of the Twilight movies.
- So Jhonny Gonzalez would like to fight Rafael Marquez? Yes, yes, a thousand times, yes.
- Well, we had to postpone Jim Bagg's appearance, unfortunately, but last week's episode of Ring Theory (<http://ringtheory.podbean.com>) was a winner nevertheless, loaded with references to our second favorite bagg: the Joe Cortez teabag. We also mixed in talk of certain physical favors in prison, and when all was said and done, it went down as "The Genitalia Episode." So even though he wasn't there, it's safe to say the Baggmeister's presence was felt.

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Big Daddy says:

Mayweather's Resume pales in comparison to Hard Nard's.. Hopkins has taken every challenge and won more than his fair share of Big Fights. Mayweather is only concerned with Easy PayDays and protecting his precious paper thin undefeated record.

Radam G says:

Easily Money May is the greater boxer and mythologist, and B-Hop is the better fighter and realist. Holla!