

## RASKIN'S RANTS: Big-Name Bonanza, From Pacquiao To Ward To Hopkins To Haye

Written by Eric Raskin  
Monday, 16 May 2011 10:16

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Another week, another interesting email about Manny Pacquiao, another excuse for me to put Pac-Man's name in my headline and earn my article hyperlinks throughout the Philippines. Now, just to spite Rick Reilly: Enjoy!

Hi Eric,

Did you hear Teddy Atlas' comments on Friday Night Fights about Pacquiao? It was a little like what you wrote in your "Raskin's Rants" last week, poking a hole in every opponent Pac-Man

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has fought in the last few years, but Teddy took it a step beyond and said Manny has to fight Sergio Martinez to prove himself. What? If there's one guy in boxing who has already proven himself, it's Pacquiao. What does Atlas have against this guy? He takes every opportunity to insinuate that he thinks Mayweather's steroid accusations are accurate (even though nobody has any proof at all), and he won't give the best fighter in the world any credit, even though he constantly takes on quality fighters (if not the very best every time) at higher weights. What the heck, did Pacquiao make a pass at Atlas' wife once or something? Is Atlas on the Team Mayweather payroll? There are things you can criticize about Pacquiao, but it really gets me riled up that Atlas takes it as far as he does. Maybe Pacquiao needs to die, so Atlas can give him a loving on-air eulogy calling him the greatest person who ever lived.

Keep up the great writing,

Greg

Hi Greg,

I agree with your underlying point, that Teddy doesn't seem to be an impartial observer when it comes to Pacquiao. I don't know if he actually has some personal distaste for Pac-Man (perhaps he's jealous, as a trainer, of Freddie Roach?) or if he just loves being a contrarian and all the pro-Pacquiao vibes emanating from most corners of the boxing media universe have driven him to be openly dubious of everything Pacquiao does. I lean toward the latter. After all, Atlas predicts upsets more than anyone else in boxing, so we know he has some of that contrarian blood pumping through his veins. Whatever the case, he has indeed gone a little too far. Passing along unsubstantiated information last year about drug-test-related emails supposedly sent by Team Pacquiao was a dangerous journalistic slip-up. Atlas hasn't done anything on that level since, but all the little things keep adding up and make Teddy a questionable authority when it comes to Pacquiao-related observations.

But here's the thing: A boxer has to expect criticism when he fights three absolute no-hopers in a row. I recognize that Pacquiao has done more to help boxing over the last five years than anyone (I wrote a cover story for World Boxing all the way back in '06, when he beat Erik Morales in their rematch, declaring that Pacquiao was carrying the sport), so I think it's fair to treat him with the proverbial kid gloves up to a point. But three straight mismatches that everybody knew were mismatches? That's excessive, and that warrants blowback.

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Two additional notes on comments in your email: First, nobody wants to see Pacquiao face Martinez more than I do. The size gap is so absurd (especially when combined with Martinez's elite skill) that I can't blame Pacquiao for not making the fight; it's wrong to say he has an obligation to fight "Maravilla" or needs to prove himself against the middleweight champ. But I still would kill to see it happen. (I wouldn't out-and-out murder someone, but I'd at least perform euthanasia.) Unfortunately, as long as Pacquiao can pull in 1.3-million or so pay-per-view buys against the Shane Mosleys of the world, it's a pipe dream.

And second, great line about Teddy's eulogies. Given 10 more seconds of air time, he probably would have explained that, in his prime, Bill Gallo could have knocked Pacquiao out.

Enough about Pacquiao; let's turn our attention to this past Saturday's big fight, next Saturday's big fight, and other assorted topics in the weekly Rants:

- How 'bout I start by tying last Saturday's and this Saturday's fights together: Many have been critical of Andre Ward's less-than-thrilling style, and you know who he kind of reminds me of? Bernard Hopkins. Highly skilled, exceptionally clever, great at neutralizing opponents' offenses, not particularly capable of the highlight-reel knockout—but moderately enjoyable to watch if you appreciate the little things. And if there's any twentysomething fighter right now who has the style to last into his 40s, it's Ward.

- I think the notion that Arthur Abraham made a mistake leaving the middleweight division is overblown. It's not that he's ineffective at 168 pounds. It's that Ward, Carl Froch, and Andre Dirrell are all significantly better than anyone he fought at 160. Look again at his record. Edison Miranda was the best he fought at middleweight, by a pretty comfortable margin.

- Fun exercise if you want to get frustrated and throw things at your television: Watch Ward-Abraham again, focusing on referee Luis Pabon as he starts moving in 10 times per round to break up clinches before the fighters have even clinched. Apparently infighting is illegal on Pabon's watch. Step aside, Joe Cortez, someone's taking aim at your "most officious" title.

- As a fan of old-school "loser leaves town" matches in wrestling, I'd definitely throw some

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support behind Abraham vs. Kelly Pavlik as an HBO or Showtime co-feature, loser is done on the premium networks. Three years ago in a different division, it would have been one of the biggest fights in boxing. I liked Pavlik in a war then, and I like him in a war now.

- As disappointing as most of the Pacquiao-Mosley Fight Camp 360 was, the Super Six version of the show continues to be top notch. Obviously, the Super Six offers more fights and fighters to focus on, and that's a major reason for the disparity in entertainment value. But I suspect it also has something to do with the fact that, while the S6 version of FC360 is a promotional vehicle, the product isn't on pay-per-view so the show isn't straight-up selling. Both shows are advertorial, but one leans more closely toward editorial, while the other leans more toward advertisement.

- To clarify, since I saw it wrong in a few places: Against Jean Pascal this Saturday, Bernard Hopkins is trying to become the oldest fighter ever to win a major title, not the oldest to hold a major title. That record will still belong to Archie Moore, regardless. (And the pursuit of that record should give Hopkins all the motivation he needs to keep going until at least age 49.)

- Wow, four neutral officials for Jean Pascal-Hopkins II, what a novel concept! Can someone please explain to me why anyone would ever assign a ref or judge who couldn't be described with the word "neutral"?

- Hey, B-Hop, Donovan McNabb got traded a year ago. He doesn't play for the Eagles anymore. Let it go.

- And the Overreaction of the Year award goes to ... all those who pronounced right after Jorge Arce's win over Wilfredo Vazquez Jr. that Arce had "punched his ticket to the Hall of Fame." Certainly, Arce helped his chances with the unexpected victory. The win might have guaranteed him a slot on the ballot, which was no certainty beforehand. But that's about it. Arce's had a very good career, but was he ever clearly the best in his division? Was he ever on the pound-for-pound list? It's hard to get into the Hall if you can't answer yes to those questions; only rare cases like Arturo Gatti (who might or might not make the Hall) and some heavyweights can fight at that sub-elite level and get in. Arce has had his share of quality wins, but he never beat a Hall of Famer (the closest to one, Rosendo Alvarez, was shot by the time they fought). And he lost decisively to plenty of guys who won't be in the Hall, like Vic Darchinyan, Cristian Mijares, Simphiwe Nongqayi, and Victor Burgos. Hey, maybe Arce can score a couple more good wins and/or be recognized by voters for his popularity. But before you compare him to

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Gatti, remember that Gatti was in the Fight of the Year four times, and Arce never was. If you think Arce "punched his ticket" against Vazquez, then it might be time to refill all of your prescriptions.

- I have to give a shout-out to Raymundo Beltran: You just don't see enough fighters get spun around behind their opponents and take the opportunity to simulate sodomy.
- Could there possibly be anything better for building interest in the Wladimir Klitschko-David Haye heavyweight title fight than if we could somehow get Haye to start dating the newly single Hayden Panettierre? At the very least, I expect Haye to show up at the next press conference with a T-shirt featuring a Photoshopped image of himself doing something pornographic with her. Anything less, and he's not putting his heart into this promotion.
- Look for a new episode of Ring Theory ( <http://ringtheory.podbean.com> ) this week, with a special guest to be determined. Is \$29.95 for a year's subscription too much for you? Here's an inside tip to make your Ring Theory sub pay for itself: Listen to Bill Dettloff's fight predictions, then place money on the other guy. It's the surest formula for sports betting success this side of having your own hot tub time machine.

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### **FighterforJC says:**

Glad to see the author and I have a similar take on Ward. On another thread I posted:

[I]Andre Ward just needs to keep on winning and remain consistent. I think he's doing just that and not trying too hard to make noise and become a superstar overnight or claim that he's the greatest. Ward has the skills, he's not too flashy but he does seem very steady. He seems to be taking the same route as Hopkins. He might not get his due credit until several years but by the time he does, people might start seeing him as a living legend. [/I]

### **mortcola says:**

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Yeah, people want more sizzle from Andre, but that confuses me. I see him as a masterful boxer with great discipline, quickness and seemingly mental toughness. his power is adequate, enough to seriously sting and keep opponents from successfully bulling in to try and neutralize the boxing. For continued success, he needs to do what he is already doing. The appreciation will come.

### **Big Daddy says:**

Ditto on Manny.. And no I'm NOT a Hater. I just wanna see a good fight for \$65. As for Andre, I have a couple of Black friends from Oakland that went to both fights and were not enthused about buying tickets again. I had a friend (a casual Boxing fan) over to watch his last fight and he was already bugging by the 5th round to get are night ont the town started. I Love the Guy, but he needs to go for the KO alot more often or he'll never reach his true potential as a Boxing SuperStar.

### **aljamieson says:**

[!]You just don't see enough fighters get spun around behind their opponents and take the opportunity to simulate sodomy.[!]

Round Ten of Calzaghe v Hopkins