

Pacquiao-Marquez III: A Six-Pac Of Signing Subplots

Written by Eric Raskin
Monday, 23 May 2011 20:24

Pacman made Marquez kiss the canvas three times in the first round of this 2004 tangle, but Marquez got his wits about him, and fought him evenly the rest of the way. (Hogan)

Three years ago, on the day after Manny Pacquiao-Juan Manuel Marquez II, I wrote a column for ESPN.com entitled “The Pacquiao-Marquez Postfight Six-Pac.” After tense back and forth discussions and negotiations with myself, I have permitted myself to steal intellectual property from me, and so, now that Pacquiao-Marquez III is officially signed, I’ve put together a prefight “six-Pac” of subplots worth discussing. With Pacquiao vs. Marquez the matchup on everybody’s mind, here are six underlying matchups worth watching for in the weeks and months ahead:

1. Size vs. Style

This is what’s at the root of the debate currently taking over the blogosphere/podcast-o-sphere/message-board-o-sphere: Is this a competitive fight or a mismatch? If you’re championing it as a competitive fight (as I am, more or less), you’re basing that on the belief that Marquez has proven his style gives Pacquiao fits, and it’s a style unlike anything Pac-Man has seen since his one-point split decision over JMM in ’08. If you’re decrying it as a mismatch, you’re basing that on the belief that Pacquiao has outgrown Marquez since their last fight and, at a contract weight of 144 pounds, Pacquiao will be at his most effective and “Dinamita” will be at his least effective.

I’ll be the first to admit that I’d rather have seen the fighters agree to meet at 140, a weight I firmly believe Manny can still make (since his team has repeatedly insisted he has to trap several pounds of food in his moustache and goatee just to tip the scales at 145). But to me, it’s more about what Marquez weighs than what Pacquiao weighs. Marquez, regardless of the contract weight, should still train to be about 135 pounds or so—in shape, comfortable, no spare tire like we saw against Floyd Mayweather. The better condition Marquez is in, the quicker he’ll be, and the more he can offset whatever poundage he’s giving away.

This is an unusual situation in that almost nobody is picking Marquez to win, but many of us endorse the fight anyway. Perhaps we’ve just been beaten down by the parade of matches (Josh Clotney, Antonio Margarito, Shane Mosley) for which you couldn’t find anyone at all picking against Pacquiao. But what I see here is an opponent who, at any weight, knows how to time and hit Pacquiao. Yes, it’s possible the size difference will influence each man’s ability to take the other’s punch. It’s possible Pacquiao will blow Marquez out, as he nearly did in their first meeting seven years ago. But whatever the outcome, I want to see Pacquiao face someone with a style that isn’t made to order. Marquez MIGHT give Pacquiao fits again. That’s good enough to get me supporting Pacquiao-Marquez III.

2. HBO vs. Showtime

This will be a fascinating behind-the-scenes battle, and the roles are very different now:

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Showtime is the incumbent, and the onus is on HBO to blow Bob Arum away with a marketing package that outdoes what Showtime and CBS can do. HBO's parent company, Time Warner, does not own any of the "big four" free networks. But it owns TNT and TBS, which are the same as a free network to any household that would ever consider ordering a pay-per-view fight. It owns CNN and might be able to promise Arum extra news coverage leading up to the Pacquiao-Marquez fight on that channel. It owns Sports Illustrated, which means HBO might be able to guarantee that Pacquiao goes on the cover the week of the fight.

There's a lot at stake here; without Pacquiao in the fold and without Mayweather in anybody's fold, HBO is in danger of going the entire year without a major moneymaker on pay-per-view. Ross Greenburg and company will be bending over backward to please, while Ken Hershman and company will be equally motivated to hold onto the biggest star in the sport and put their competitors in a world of hurt. Pacquiao vs. Marquez MIGHT be a two-way slugfest; HBO vs. Showtime definitely WILL be.

3. Top Rank vs. Golden Boy

Even those who weren't excited to see Pacquiao-Marquez III consummated expressed delight over Lance Pugmire's report in the L.A. Times that Arum met face to face with Richard Schaefer of Golden Boy Promotions (to politely pry Marquez away from him) and that the meeting ended "in a burst of goodwill, with handshakes."

Look, Top Rank doesn't need Golden Boy all that badly right now. But GBP could greatly benefit from matching some of its fighters against Top Rank's and eventually getting its finger in the Pacquiao pie again. So Schaefer, intelligently, let Marquez go without kicking up much of a fuss. (Well, he kicked up a little fuss initially, but rolled over in the end.) If Top Rank and Golden Boy start working together again, as Arum said he expects they will, it's a huge victory for both promotional companies and for the fight fans.

And, not to set everyone up for disappointment by being overly optimistic, but if that Mayweather guy ever decides he wants to risk his perfect record against Pacquiao and make \$40-million or so to do it, this would be one less obstacle to stand in the way of the fight the world has been demanding for the last two years.

4. Juan Manuel Marquez vs. David Diaz

This is a tough one to wrap my head around. Why exactly would Marquez risk blowing his \$5-million (at least) payday with a keep-busy fight against Diaz on July 2? If something goes wrong here, it ends the 18-year reign of Michael Bentt-Tommy Morrison as the go-to example of a tuneup-turned-tragedy. And it's not impossible for something to go wrong here. Ninety-eight times out of 100, JMM whips Diaz with all the bones removed from his hands and his feet tied together. But one time out of 100, Marquez gets a nasty cut from a clash of heads. And one time out of 100, Diaz catches him with the perfect punch.

For fans of symmetry, perhaps it's pleasing that the very same tuneup opponent Pacquiao butchered after the second Marquez fight will be presented to Marquez three years later. But for

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fans of sanity, it's shocking that Marquez-Diaz could actually happen. There are ways to stay sharp by simulating a fight in the gym while wearing headgear and not taking any chance of suffering an official defeat. But if Marquez vs. Diaz goes forward, it's a tuneup that the boxing world will be watching nervously and intently.

5. Urine vs. Steroids

These serve as a diversion from some of the serious subplots, and it can't be denied that we'll hear plenty about both of these substances entering the fighters' bodies over the next few months. You can't build to a Marquez fight anymore without acknowledging that the man likes to get his drinkle on. (Do I get credit for that one on UrbanDictionary.com?) And as we've sadly come to learn, every phony story about Pacquiao 'roiding up will create a hurricane of interest and retweeting from his detractors.

Throughout the buildup to Pacquiao-Marquez III, we will see/hear/read about what these fighters are or aren't putting into their bodies. One will be unimportant and will serve to amuse and entertain. The other will be highly important and will serve to stir up fabricated controversy.

And it's probably only a matter of time until an unnamed source blogs about how he watched Manny shoot up, then pee into a cup, then Marquez drank the pee and got juiced up himself. Let the reckless tweeting begin.

6. Floyd Mayweather vs. Anybody

The sixth subplot of this six-Pac was supposed to be Timothy Bradley vs. Amir Khan, a fight that, a few days ago, looked like it was poised to come together now that Bradley's dream of fighting Pacquiao in the fall had been dashed by the Pacquiao-Marquez signing. So I wrote a few staggeringly brilliant paragraphs about this battle for undisputed junior welterweight supremacy. And then Bradley took his reputation for doing damage by using his head to a new level. Instead of relying on his fighter's instinct and signing for the fight, he found a way to convince himself he has better options. I'm pretty sure he's wrong, but that's a discussion for another day.

Instead, the discussion turns to the name that lurks in the background of every Pacquiao fight. The Pacquiao vs. Mayweather talk hasn't slowed down—at least not among the mainstream observers and general sports show talking heads—and the rumor mill will churn over the next few months as to whether and when Mayweather will fight again. Pacquiao-Marquez III is still almost six months away; will Floyd fight in the interim? In terms of a possible opponent, the name that keeps popping up is Paul Spadafora. (You know, because Pito Cardona isn't available and Stefano Zoff wants too much money.)

Whether he takes a tuneup, a real fight, or no fight at all, Mayweather's name will swim about the Pacquiao-Marquez proceedings. It's a constant subplot.

Maybe the Vegas casinos will even post lines on whether "Money" will fight again this year. If they do, look for Mayweather to place bets on both sides. It seems he hasn't made his mind up

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yet, and he's going to want to be able to show us the winning ticket either way.

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culto says:

most of us pacfans who'll stay away from anything, even crimes, to watch this fight are motivated by a pervert longing to see marquez demolished unconditionally by pacquiao and finally shut his urine-sipping gab up for committing the obnoxious folly of chasing pacquiao in the philippines, where marquez was being treated cordially as a guest, and relentlessly pointed out to him and all filipinos, on television and interviews, that he beat him twice. marquez's shameless candor about this exasperates pacfans, so believe it or not, this is one fight that will get unabashed support from pacfans all over the world because of that.

pacfans even wish that marquez would not go ahead with his planned tune-up fight with diaz due to the same not so impossible unfortunate occurrences you mentioned so that the fight could commence.

by the way, "drinkle" made me giggle, but wouldn't "drine" be apt too?

yeah, what's wrong with endless sparring, 24 hours a day, starting today until november for marquez in exchange for 5 million dollars, instead of a tune-up fight against diaz who's now piqued for being rendered a tune-up fighter and so's promising to derail the fight by overwhelming the former?

Radam G says:

Da Manny will do much more than make the peepee banger kiss da canvas. He will make Marquez stick to the canvas like some cheap glue. With a well-fed PacMan, Marquez will not have a prayer or clue. He is not fighting a starved 125 pounder or a 130 pounder one. He is fighting a full-grown Pinoy. Da Manny will take Marquez with a superior double tap and maybe a few predator drones. Marquez will never see what hit him. Holla!

ultimoshogun says:

The best news in this article is Arum expects Top Rank and Golden Boy to start working together again...I'm still inclined to believe Marquez will still be very competitive vs Pacman, but to be honest I don't expect a win, unless Marquez somehow avoids the canvas...as for Mayweather, he needs to take care of his legal problems before stepping in the ring again...I'm still optimistic that this mega fight will eventually happen sometime next year.

Radam G says:

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Everybodee and dey momma always have a GREAT chance of beating Da Manny in BIG TALK outside dat squared jungle. But once da sucka step between those ropes, his arse is sliced and diced. Then the BIG TALK changes to "Manny always fights so-and-so's leftovers." Okay, RIGHT! But those leftovers keep putting BIG MOOLA into Da Manny's pockets and bank accounts. Haters hate, leftovers and long-in-da-tooth chumps get Da Manny madly paid. For Da Manny, it is all about the prizefighting, for hater and their latest "BEAT-DA-PacMAN Hope," it is about serving fibs, serving hope sandwiches and pridedfighting. Holla!

undisputed34 says:

well i guess ill go against the grain and give JMM a shot. if nothing else, ill go with the intangibles...pacman seems to have every advantage expect for two...heart (where i think that they are atleast equal) and boxing acumen..(where i think JMM edges pac-daddy by a tiny bit)...im basing my opinion on this...have we ever really seen pacman "solve" anybody? pacmans answer to every question in the ring has been speed and conditioning...dont get me wrong...hey, if you have it, flaunt it i say...but i give marquez a shot because atleast he wont be flustered by it. i agree with the author and ultimo...he should come in at the weight he feels most comfortable and where he feels strongest and avoid the canvas by not trying to force the fight. i'd like to see him go back to his counterpunching roots and conserve his energy because he has to know pacman is gonna bring it. with all these bigger guys pac had to atleast be aware of the other guys power..not so much with JMM. i say he should counter and turn manny all night long..and whenever he lands a clean shot and manny steps back to pound his gloves together(which he sometimes does to amp himself up) step right with him and keep it going. by no means will any of this guarantee him a win but hey, i love a cinderella story. I know this fight has an astronomically high chance of being a mid to late round stoppage for pacman but can anybody even envision what ive said happening and what the outcome would be if JMM came out and did this?

ali says:

Its funny how Pac can fight Mosley coming off a lost and draw and then get on Mayweather head for fighting Zab coming off a lost. Another thing its o.k for Pac to fight Marquez at welterweight but when Mayweather did it yall Pactards killed him for it double standard like a mother f*cker.

FighterforJC says:

[QUOTE=ali;6662]Its funny how Pac can fight Mosley coming off a lost and draw and then get on Mayweather head for fighting Zab coming off a lost. Another thing its o.k for Pac to fight Marquez at welterweight but when Mayweather did it yall Pactards killed him for it double standard like a mother f*cker.[/QUOTE]

The difference is Pacquiao as cleaned up the welterweight division, destroying THE absolute top welterweights in Cotto, Clottey and Margarito. Mosley was the final puzzle, he's a name, but Pac's gotta do what he's gotta do. Mayweather for the past 5 years avoided Cotto, Margarito, Paul Williams, and until last year, Mosley after ducking him for 10 years. When Mayweather fought Marquez at welterweight, Mayweather weighed in over the catchweight. There's no

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dancing around this. You guys run fast and are gifted anatomically, but above the shoulders, it's a whole other story.

ali says:

[QUOTE=FighterforJC;6663]The difference is Pacquiao as cleaned up the welterweight division, destroying THE absolute top welterweights in Cotto, Clottey and Margarito. Mosley was the final puzzle, he's a name, but Pac's gotta do what he's gotta do. Mayweather for the past 5 years avoided Cotto, Margarito, Paul Williams, and until last year, Mosley after ducking him for 10 years. When Mayweather fought Marquez at welterweight, Mayweather weighed in over the catchweight. There's no dancing around this. You guys run fast and are gifted anatomically, but above the shoulders, it's a whole other story.[/QUOTE]

Really!!!!!!....Let me ask you something before I answer that post you just wrote do you think its a double standard when it comes to Pac and MayweatherYes or NO

brownsugar says:

While this is hypothetically a mis- match... nobody deserves this farewell party more than Marquez... If Shane can get some of that Pac retirement juice....why can't Marquez?.... Pac sure likes to spread the wealth around. And He 's making sure that our favorite ICONS retire in style. If Undisputed is even half right about Marquez's chances and the masterboxing lightweight manages to have even a few good moments against Pac.....Like Radam G would say..."everybody an dey momma" will be crawling out of the woodwork to fight Pac next. Then maybe then Arum would be willing to match the Pinoy Phenom against someone with a pulse.. not saying Marquez doesn't have one but there are more interesting fights available than the comparably smaller Marquez.

undisputed34 says:

[QUOTE=FighterforJC;6663]The difference is Pacquiao as cleaned up the welterweight division, destroying THE absolute top welterweights in Cotto, Clottey and Margarito. Mosley was the final puzzle, he's a name, but Pac's gotta do what he's gotta do. Mayweather for the past 5 years avoided Cotto, Margarito, Paul Williams, and until last year, Mosley after ducking him for 10 years. When Mayweather fought Marquez at welterweight, Mayweather weighed in over the catchweight. There's no dancing around this. You guys run fast and are gifted anatomically, but above the shoulders, it's a whole other story.[/QUOTE]

Let me ask you one question my friend...when you are thinking about the african american(s) that must have terrorized you in your youth(or maybe even still today) before letting us all in on it with quotable posts like the one above, have you ever once stopped to ask yourself, "What would Jesus Do?"

Radam G says:

Wow! This place is getting stereotyped out and kind of wacky and tacky. Enough said for now!

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Holla!

the Roast says:

Good question Undisputed34, I was wondering the same thing.

Radam G says:

IMHO Jesus Woulda, Shoulda and Coulda Whipped arse, just as He did when He saw gambling going on in the temple - the "House of the Lord!" I don't buy that Jesus Was a Lamb. He Was Maybe part Lamb and a lot of Lion, and Wasn't always in da Know. I'm reminded of how he cussed out a tree for not growing figs fast enough. And how He Asked: "Father! Have Thee Forsaken Me?" But maybe Jesus Forsaken Duperman -- I mean Superman -- Roy Jones Jr. Roy said that Jesus Would Be There with him. Maybe Roy 'musta fo' got" to send that text to Jesus residence behind those "Pearly Gates." Holla!

undisputed34 says:

@ radam LMAO...tears coming out of my eyes..sometimes i dont understand you, but ahhh...when i do...

FighterforJC says:

[QUOTE=undisputed34;6671]Let me ask you one question my friend...when you are thinking about the african american(s) that must have terrorized you in your youth(or maybe even still today) before letting us all in on it with quotable posts like the one above, have you ever once stopped to ask yourself, "What would Jesus Do?"[/QUOTE]

First off, I have nothing against blacks. TWO, not one, but TWO of my very best friends are black and I like Holyfield and Hopkins, too. And Ali and Leonard and a whole bunch of black fighters.

However, fact is, Mayweather only has black fans AND, only the STUPIDEST creatures, black, white or otherwise can be a fan of Mayweather. Being intelligent and being a fan of Mayweather are mutually exclusive. Therefore, all of Mayweather's fans are stupid, and since he only has black fans, then those fans are all stupid.

Finally, I don't believe in the pop culture Jesus, "WWJD." That's how people get into creating their own versions of Jesus. The more important question would be, "What DID Jesus do?"

Ya dig?

Real Talk says:

@FightwriterJC, Pretty Boy Floyd Money Mayweather has fans of every color, creed an denomination. Thing is the most intelligent boxing minds are most certainly Floyd fans because

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if you understand the Sweet Science, are a student on apprentice or wizard level and appreciate the craft and skill you'll know things when you see it. Comparing BrownSugar an a couple others post who appreciate skills to yours it's glaringly apparent the difference in levels. You're a novice up in here. Dueces