

Slap Happy Time: A Glove Full of Dukes That Might Replace Mayweather-Pacquiao..WOOLEVER

Written by Phil Woolever

Tuesday, 31 January 2012 20:42



Hernandez-Cunningham II should be a legit slugfest in Stuttgart on Saturday.

ALTERNATIVE CORNERS - Is the Manny Pacquiao versus Floyd Mayweather saga getting blabbed away to the point of becoming a lowest common denominator?

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Instead of wham bam, thank you Mon and Man, we get blah blah blah, yakety yak.

If the twain shan't meet, it ain't the end of the boxing world.

This is not to dispute the near certainty that Mayweather- Pacquiao isn't the best possible pairing amongst however many tens of thousand professional boxers there are on these planet these days.

That superfight might not get signed for a spell. So, while there isn't anything on the horizon of a similar magnitude in the mean time, there are other options on the wish list.

Less star power, but not too shabby.

Notice that the operative term of this piece's title is "might".

Nothing supersedes a clash between the fighters, in whatever very disputable order you put them, proven and perceived as the top two pound for pounders in the business. However, some speculation carries too much sense of urgency. As if Mayweather-Pacquiao fails to materialize it's another steep, irreversible tumble in the sport's inevitable decline.

No so at all. In fact, despite motivational problems in a few major fighters' performances, and official gaffes in big events like Mayweather-Victor Ortiz or Bernard Hopkins-Chad Dawson, 2011 was not a bad year for boxing. That bellowing should be ignored, the same as doofs who insist boxing is dying, year after year after year. Recognition and respect in the public eye continued a rejuvenation, far more vital for the sport overall than any fight or result.

2012 will be OK whether or not Floyd, Manny and whatever powers at be decide to share in the slugging synchronicity or not.

The gloved-up game will rumble on despite any two participants. Outside financial gains (true, a primary objective) neither "Pac-man" or "Money" is yet as complete a global star as Ali or Tyson were. In another decade there will be new, currently unknown names on the list of future legends.

Meanwhile, in an old school boxer's dozen, actually, over 15 rounds worth; we present some fights beside Pacquiao-Mayweather that qualify as potentially classic clobberings. Those who scoff at the notion of good fights among the big boys may want to join the bad year/boxing is dead association.

Topping the list of potentially titanic tilts, but also topping the list of those least likely to occur, comes the non-existent sibling rivalry between the Brothers Klitschko, Vitali, 56-3 (49), and Wladimir 43-2 (40). Won't happen, but if it did recent form favors big brother.

Another dare to be great clash that could restore some of the division's lost lustre would be an eliminator between towering, undefeated contenders Robert Helenius and Tyson Fury. Both men are currently 17-0. Fury has 12 KOs, Helenius 11 KOs versus higher ranked opposition.

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Helenius seems to have more punching power, Fury seems to have more staying power. Tim-ber!

One battle that not only should happen but probably will, especially since it's scheduled to go down in Stuttgart on February 25th, pits Alexander Povetkin, 23-0 (16), against Marco Huck, 34-1 (25). If Povetkin trainer Teddy Atlas remains out of that corner it helps cruiserweight titlist Huck's chances, but probably not nearly enough. For all the hype about Huck's speed and aggression, it remains way uphill. Povetkin is just as fast and tougher than he looks. Povetkin by TKO around the 8th, in an exciting brawl.

Tomasz Adamek, 44-2 (26), wants a couple decent victories to put him back in title contention after Vitali conked him. Soviet southpaw Denis Lebedev, 23-1 (17), says he wants to move up after a successful cruiser career. Adamek has already done so. Neither man is likely to budge. If they held this Poland-Russia rivalry in a place like Wroclaw's new soccer stadium it could draw 50,000 fans who'd get their money's worth from the spectacle alone. Right now, it's Adamek by late round, bloody stoppage. Unless the fight is in Russia, where all bets are off.

Yet another 200 plus pound punchout with primo potential pits semi-retired, still squawking attraction David Haye, 25-2 (23), against brash, seemingly much more willing swing swapper Dereck Chisora, 15-2 (9) (who faces Vitali K February 18th, in another potentially solid match). Chisora give Haye plenty of his own style prefight insults, and gladly match any stunt "The Hayemaker" pulled.

At the 200 pound limit, Yoan Pablo Hernandez, 25-1 (13), meets former titlist Steve "USS" Cunningham again, February 4th in Stuttgart. Their bout last October was shaping up as a thriller before it was halted due to Hernandez cuts from accidental butts, while Hernandez held a very slim lead. Cunningham, 24-3 (12), had been decked early but he was coming back strong. It was anybody's fight at the premature conclusion. Despite moderate KO ratios, this fight is unlikely to go 12. Pick 'em. Either Cunningham's revenge or Hernandez's star rising. Whoever lands the first left hook wins.

It would be intriguing to watch light-heavy champ Bernard Hopkins, 52-5-2 (32), meet top dog super-middleweight Andre Ward, 25-0 (13), at a catch weigh around 171, if possible. The experience of Father Time, versus the future. At 6'1 with a listed 75" reach Hopkins and Ward, at 6'0 and 71" could be one of the best stinging chess matches ever, pitting Hopkins' size and wit against Ward's youth and speed. Hard to call, depending on the weight. Hopkins - Dawson II is a good start.

If the usually crowd pleasing Carl Froch, 28-2 (20), doesn't formalize his two fight, home and away agreement with Lucian Bute, Froch still has highly profitable options like a rematch of his fine fracas with Mikkel Kessler. It would be quite a sight of combos should Froch decide on tackling German Robert Stieglitz, 41-2 (23), with a lady friend who appeared as photogenic as Froch's partner Rachel Cordingly. The obviously shy Cordingly wouldn't have to go solo with the burden of cameras aimed, supposedly, at her face.

At middleweight, the often discussed (in Germany at least) but never negotiated epic between

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Felix Sturm and Arthur Abraham is losing its shelf live but still a great match that would electrify a soccer/stadium or sell out a 20,000 capacity arena. Three or four years back this might have been the best perspective matchup in the bunch. But while each man claimed they were anxious to prove supremacy, both camps seemed hesitant to actually bring the fight to fruition. While each man is considered faded these days, it's still not a too little too late situation. Sturm by convincing decision. It's not only perceived vulnerability that has most contenders chasing Sturm. It looks like he is off to a great start as a promotional partner, including good treatment for participants.

Another stimulating 160 range encounter would feature emerging alphabet titlist Genady Golovkin, 22-0 (19), against Mathew Macklin, 28-3 (19), in a rumble that could be over in a minute or could see 12 full frames of toe to toe trading. Both men are 29, aggressive, and near peak form. Macklin has strong motivation after a disputable loss to Sturm, and subsequently relocating to the USA. Golovkin looked awesome when he smashed Lujan Simon. A highly combustible collision, with Macklin favored slightly through a higher level of competition but Golovkin showing more room for continued improvement. Any chance of this fight happening depends on Macklin's challenge of Sergio Martinez.

Ortiz - Andre Berto II. A proven commodity that speaks for itself. All that needs to be said. We hope Berto's bicep clears up and these two can re-set-up the sequel sluggathon.

A potential classic waits in the welterweight wings for top 147 pound prospects, and it could be the best young gun test imaginable. 28 year old Mike Jones of Philadelphia is undefeated at 26-0. The UK's 25 year old Kell Brook is 26-0. Jones has 19 knockouts. Brook has 18 knockouts. Both men claim to be ready for anybody. Need we say more? Slap happy time.

In the lighter weight realm, a pair of proven performers are ready for another hard earned, career defining payday. A bantam range bout around 115 between Jorge Arce, 59-6-2 (45), and Brian Viloria, 30-3 (17), could be dynamite. Both the 32 year old Arce and 31 year old Viloria had been written off as damaged goods before returning to capture major titles and resurrect stardom. Arce has five more years of hard wear but that also means more experience in the trenches, which favors him. Upset! Viloria by late, bloody, come from behind TKO rally.

Until Mayweather -Pacquiao is contracted, almost every aforementioned proposal except the unlikely K2 conflict (almost a complete impossibility) is just as feasible, maybe more so, than the currently craved superfight between Mayweather and Pacquiao. Some contests listed here have already been scheduled.

Even if by some quick twisted of fistic fate Mayweather-Pacquiao does happen this year, its already questionable whether the fight occurs anywhere near their respective, concurrent primes.

If or whenever they do engage : Mayweather by controversial, maybe riot causing TKO 9.

The only thing that might excuse their excellencies from actually boxing would be if Pacquiao

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gave Juan Manuel Marquez a break and a rematch while Mayweather challenged Sergio Martinez. About as likely as Pacquiao and Mayweather agreeing to fight by the time you read this.

Maybe Pacquiao and Mayweather are content to share the distinction of being number 1 and 1a, without the judgment of actual competition. They've already got legitimate bragging rights wrapped up for the decade. Each elite performer has achieved status likely to remain unparalleled for twenty years.

Maybe they are indeed aiming to own the era.

Maybe, without much doubt, it's even more of a business than it appears.

Maybe its just the intricately simple matter of boxing politics, not personal preferences, keeping Pacquiao and Mayweather from testing each other.

Maybe nobody should worry about it.

It will be interesting to see the fireworks if Mayweather - Pacquiao is signed, sealed, delivered.

It will be interesting to see the perception of their legacies if they don't fight.

It may be a simple matter one way or the other when compared to other champions, who may not have beaten every great foe they faced, but were willing to try.

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