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Mayweather runs from Pacquiao again

By Mike Street
Special to The Asian Reporter

Floyd “Money” Mayweather spent years running from the “Fight of the Century” against Manny “Pacman” Pacquiao. When the fight finally took place, Mayweather spent most of it continuing to run from his opponent. But that’s Money’s style, as one of the top defensive boxers of all time, and his ducking and dodging gave him a unanimous decision over Pacman. The victory made Mayweather the undisputed welterweight champion and best pound-for-pound boxer in the world, leaving Pacquiao fans wondering what might be next for the aging Filipino boxer.

For more than five years, boxing fans had been anticipating the fight, which was repeatedly postponed as the boxers argued over finances or the rules surrounding the fight. Had the bout occurred five years ago, with both men closer to their prime, it might have been a better spectacle. As it was, the title fight — the richest in boxing history — was mostly marked by the absence of fighting.

Pacquiao, a southpaw, is known for firing off flurries of powerful punches from a variety of angles. Mayweather is known for his defense, combined with deadly counter-punching that has kept him undefeated at 48-0. When they fought on May 2, these techniques were in evidence, but only Mayweather’s defense was at its peak.

Pacman threw plenty of punches, continually backing Mayweather into a corner or against the ropes, but few of them staggered his 38-year-old opponent. The only time Money seemed fazed happened in the fourth round, when the Filipino nailed Mayweather with a left hand. He followed Mayweather to the ropes and continued to pummel his opponent, but could not capitalize on his brief advantage.

For his part, Mayweather eluded nearly all of the punches from Pacman, who landed only 19 percent of the blows he threw, the worst performance of his career. But Money’s counterpunches did little damage against the 36-year-old Pacquiao. At the end of the bout, both men looked as unmarked as they had at the weigh-in, not at all resembling what spectators expected from the “Fight of the Century.”

In post-fight interviews, Pacquiao insisted “I thought I won the fight ... He didn’t do nothing.” But the judges — and boxing analysts — saw things differently. The judges scored the fight unanimously in favor of Mayweather, to the chagrin of the crowd, who booed Money lustily as he paraded around the ring and climbed the ropes to proclaim, “I know I won!”

The crowd had plenty to boo about. Mayweather is known as much for using his fists outside the ring as he is for using them inside the ring. Since 2003, he has been accused in seven different domestic violence cases against five different women. He is dismissive of his critics, insisting that without photographic evidence, the accusations are all hearsay. Two outspoken critics of his — both prominent female sports journalists — were denied credentials to the fight.

Everyone wanted Manny Pacquiao to beat Mayweather, but he couldn’t muster enough power to knock out his elusive opponent. That lack of power, Pacquiao claimed after the fight, was due to a torn rotator cuff in his right shoulder that he had sustained during training a few weeks before the fight. Although it seemed like an excuse, the injury was severe enough for him to undergo surgery a few days after the fight; his recovery will keep him out for nine months to a year.

That bad shoulder would explain why Pacman was unable to deliver much damage to Mayweather. It will cast an even longer shadow over a fight whose luster is already greatly diminished by its anticlimactic lack of actual fighting. The logical solution, especially considering the record-setting profits from the bout, would be for the two men to meet again when Pacman is healthy.

But Mayweather, who said he was open to a rematch shortly after the fight, has since changed his mind, calling Pacquiao a coward for failing to acknowledge that Mayweather was a better fighter. A rematch also would not fit into the plans that Money revealed after the fight, when he said he would fight once again in September, and then retire.

Whether or not he is able to get a rematch with Mayweather, Manny Pacquiao still has a few years left in the tank and could regain his welterweight titles, since Mayweather plans to vacate them once he retires. Before the fight took place, Pacquiao said he would retire next year to run for the Philippine Senate (he is already a representative).

If Pacman continues to box, he will have lost his
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ANTICIPATION OVER. Filipinos (left photo) cheer during a round-by-round live satellite broadcast from Las Vegas of the welterweight boxing title fight between Manny Pacquiao of the Philippines and American Floyd Mayweather Jr., at suburban Marikina city, east of Manila, the Philippines. Pacquiao lost to Mayweather Jr. via a unanimous decision. Hundreds of fans in some parts of Metro Manila were not able to watch the 12-round fight due to a sudden downpour and signal interruption. Pictured at right are billboards in Mandaluyong city in the Philippines. (AP Photos/Bullit Marquez)



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