

Solar to sue Pacquiao, ABS-CBN for P150 million

by ABAC CORDERO
Philstar.com

SOLAR Sports will not take it sitting down and said last March 19 it will sue Manny Pacquiao and giant television network ABS-CBN for damages that could be worth as much as P150 million.

"We will sue Manny (Pacquiao) and ABS-CBN," said lawyer Enrique dela Cruz of Solar which felt betrayed by Pacquiao's sudden decision to renew his ties with ABS-CBN.

Pacquiao has a valid contract with Solar for the airing of his future fights until 2011 but the other day announced from Los Angeles he is rescinding the contract in favor of ABS-CBN.

He said Pacquiao and ABS-CBN would be the co-defendants in the case.

The Solar legal counsel said they're looking at a ballpark figure of P150 million to represent damages. Unconfirmed reports said Pacquiao got a little less than that from ABS-CBN in the deal.

Dela Cruz said the case should be filed next week in Makati City.

ABS-CBN issued the statement recently after Pacquiao made the announcement, and said it was happy to welcome the boxer back in their fold.

At the same time, Solar warned the public that it still has the exclusive rights to the "audio-visual presentation" of all Pacquiao bouts until May of 2011.

"Manny Pacquiao's attempt to rescind the License Agreement (with Solar) without any factual or legal basis is ill-advised. All third parties are hereby warned against any tortuous interference with the License Agreement.

"Solar shall avail of all its legal remedies to the fullest extent against any undue breach and/or tortuous interference with the License Agreement," it said in an official statement.

In Los Angeles, Pacquiao stayed focused in training, not letting himself get carried away by the developments.

"May mga tao ako dyan para mag-asikaso (I have people there to take care of things)," he told ABS-CBN sportscaster Dyan Castillejo.

Dela Cruz said what happened was an offshoot of the network battle between ABS-CBN and GMA-7, which has aired Pacquiao's most recent fights through Solar Sports.

In another development, GMA-7 said it was "very disappointed" with Pacquiao's decision to dump Solar Sports in favor of ABS-CBN, a former broadcast partner of the boxing icon.

GMA-7 also stressed that the contract for the airing of Pacquiao fights is between the boxer and Solar Sports, which only enters in blocktime agreements with the ABS-CBN's bitter rival.

Pacquiao has two existing shows with GMA-7 (*Pinoy Records* and *Totoy Bato*), and gets a lot of entertainment offers but with the developments GMA-7 "may have to review these now."

Lawyer Dick Perez of GMA-

7 said Pacquiao has a separate contract with the network, and which "prohibits him from appearing on any television program, show, promotion or event of any other broadcast media entity."

Perez said GMA-7 has not given Pacquiao its "consent to appear in ABS-CBN." However, it was not stated if GMA-7 also plans to file a case against the boxer.

A GMA-7 news report, said Pacquiao wrote Solar a letter saying he is ready to relinquish the contract with Solar.

Dela Cruz said Pacquiao, in his letter, claimed a delay in payment from Solar as his reason, but the lawyer said otherwise.

"Unless he demanded previously there was no delay. His letter was dated March 17 and on March 16 he received the money. Solar does not owe him based on records. He even had advances," the lawyer said.

"Under the contract, he can only back out (of the contract) if there was any breach incapable



of any remedy. He should have given us a 15-day notice of the breach and if it cannot be remedied, it called for another 30-day notice," Dela Cruz said.

Reports said Pacquiao's move to renew his ties with ABS-CBN might be related to the 2010 elections. Pacquiao is once again running for Congress, and the network was to play a major part in his bid for office.

GMA-7 said if this is true, then

this is illegal. Insiders said ABS-CBN big boss Gabby Lopez has been negotiating with Solar owner Wilson Tieng regarding the Pacquiao contract, adding that the giant network wanted everything but Solar did not give in.

A source also said Solar has already given Pacquiao a down payment for the airing of the Hatton fight. ■

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