

Hatton scoffs at Pacman's money shot

by ABAC CORDERO
Philstar.com

RICKY Hatton, still heavy at 154 pounds with just over 30 days before the fight, laughed off claims made by Manny Pacquiao's trainer, Freddie Roach, that the British champ has a weak chin.

"Keep talking," said Hatton before bursting into laughter, as reported by ABS-CBN which has a man, bureau chief Danny Buenafe, in London trying to get and deliver the latest from the Hatton camp.

A few days ago, Roach said Pacquiao would go for the Hatton's chin and hope to put their May 2 showdown in Las Vegas to an early end.

"We're going for his chin. That's the money shot," said Roach.

But Hatton doesn't think it's going to happen.

"I'm a lot better. I'm taking

shots moving the head, jabbing. I think the tape they've been watching, they've been watching the old Ricky Hatton. So they have to work," said Hatton.

The 30-year-old British is the reigning IBO light-welterweight champion, and Pacquiao will try to take it away from him, and emerge as one of the very few fighters to win five titles in different weight classes.

Hatton's trainer, Floyd Mayweather Sr., has some word war going on against Roach. He's went at it, when Hatton opened the doors to his Manchester training camp to the media last Wednesday, March 25.

"I think that Ricky has better skills. Ricky will be backing the Pacman up against the ropes or in the corner, he'll (Pacquiao) be having a lot of problems right there," he said.

On the chin issue, he has this to say.

"Anybody can play jokes with

himself, you want to fool yourself and try to fool the public? That's fine. At the end of the day only one fighter will be standing and I know who it's going to be. It's going to be the Hitman Hatton," Mayweather said.

The self-proclaimed greatest trainer in boxing is confident that Hatton will be in shape, down to 140 pounds, on the eve of the fight. Reports that he's still at 154 may be a ploy to throw Pacquiao off.

"Roach has said a few things that have upset Floyd - like Manny Pacquiao is going to knock me out in three rounds - and he was nothing short of disgusted by that. It got his back up a bit. This fight is about getting the tactics right and who is the better trainer," Hatton told The Daily Telegraph.



British boxer Ricky Hatton flashes a 'Hit Man' tattoo on his back during a training session in Manchester, England for his Las Vegas showdown with Manny Pacquiao.

lignaggi when I was moving my head, jabbing better and making better angles without losing any of my ferocity, that I made the right choice of coach," he said.

"Maybe it is all early mind games and he is trying to big up his fighter, confidence-wise. It doesn't matter what I read or what help Manny gets from Amir (Khan). Nothing can faze me. This is my fight."

Hatton said it's fine with him that Khan, a close friend, is helping Pacquiao in his training.

Hatton said he's making sure that he'll be the bigger fighter in the ring on May 2, and that he'll be the biggest fighter Pacquiao ever faced. The British cyclone said he will climb the ring at 154 pounds.

"You will do anything to throw off your opponent," said Roach, who also plays with the numbers sometimes.

Pacquiao, according to the latest word out of the Wild Card Gym, is down to 148 or 149 pounds. ■

No luck for RP bet in ice skating tourney

by DENNIS U. EROA
Inquirer.net

THERE were no surprises as Filipino skater Michael Dimalanta finished dead last among 50 competitors in the men's short program of the World Figure Skating Championships at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, California.

The 21-year-old Dimalanta scored 27.53 points in the tournament, which featured the world's top skaters.

Sanctioned by the International Skating Union (ISU), the competition was a qualifying tournament for the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Canada.

Dimalanta, who is based in the United States, failed to gain outright entry to the Winter Games but will have another chance to qualify this November in Germany.

Only the top 24 finishers in the worlds would qualify for the Games.

Dimalanta earned the right to represent the country after ruling last year's National Open at the SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City.

Still to see action for the country is Gracielle Jeanne Tan who will also try to nail an Olympic slot.

Like Dimalanta, 19-year-old Tan is a veteran of various international competitions. Both skaters are members of the ISU and Philippine Olympic Committee-recognized Philippine Skating Union headed by Ric Camaligan.

Both skaters are also being supported by SM.

Tan, who is based in Los Angeles, made it to the World Figure Skating Championships after finishing in the top 24 of last year's Four Continents Figure Skating Championships in Vancouver.

Dimalanta's output placed him far behind the winning 84.40 total of gold medalist Brian Joubert of France.

American bet Evan Lysacek took the silver with 82.70 points. Canadian Patrick Chan settled for the bronze with 82.55 points. ■

RP five off to Belgrade; 'naturalized' bet dropped

by JOEY VILLAR
Philstar.com

AMERICAN Chris Taft made good impression but failed to meet medical requirements and was subsequently cut from the Smart Gilas Pilipinas national squad even as the team leaves for Belgrade.

Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas executive director Noli Eala last March 26 said they have dropped the 6-10 Taft from the list of candidates for naturalization.

"Upon due deliberation, the SBP has decided to cut Chris Taft from the lineup of the Smart Gilas Pilipinas national team program," said Eala. "Mr. Taft did not meet the physical and medical requirements of the team program."

There were reports that the former Golden State Warrior had a hard time adjusting to the country's weather and bothered by constant migraine attacks.

Taft, who arrived here last week, had attended practice but played only not longer than 30 minutes in

scrimmages supervised by Smart Gilas Pilipinas Serbian coach Rajko Toroman. Meanwhile, the Nationals left last March 27 for Belgrade, Serbia for a series of tune-up games.

"The decision in keeping with our commitment not to trifle with the naturalization process while ensuring that only the most qualified candidate is selected for our Smart RP team," Eala said.

"Meantime, the team will depart for Belgrade to train and play seven games versus the top division one and two Serbian teams," he said.

Eala said they've now contacted their international scouts Steve Olinick and Jim Kelly to resume search for Taft's replacement.

Eala said if the SBP couldn't find a foreign player who wants a long-term relationship with RP, they might settle for someone who can agree for a short-term stint specifically one who will reinforce the squad in the import-laced FIBA-Asia Champions Cup this May in Jakarta, Indonesia. ■

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