

Cotto on Pacman bout: It's 145 pounds or bust

by ABAC CORDERO
Philstar.com

IF you think Miguel Cotto is dying to fight Manny Pacquiao, at any weight, anytime, anywhere, think again.

The WBO welterweight champion from Puerto Rico is not.



Miguel Cotto Photo courtesy of Philstar.com

Maybe not now when he has a big fight to think of.

"Nothing less than 145 pounds," Cotto, younger, bigger and stronger than Pacquiao, told Primera Hora.

Cotto told the Puerto Rican newspaper he's not willing to fight Pacquiao "below 145 pounds."

Cotto's statement, which comes close to his June 13 showdown with the dangerous Josh Clottey in New York, puts a little doubt on Bob Arum's statement that a Cotto-Pacquiao fight would be easy to stage.

Cotto and Pacquiao are both under Top Rank, and Arum thinks he shouldn't have a problem getting two of his fighters up at Madison Square Garden for a huge fight later this year.

Weight, sometimes more than money, could either make or break a planned fight.

Pacquiao's trainer, Freddie Roach, said they might fight either Cotto or Shane Mosley if they're willing to go down to at least 142 lb, and nothing more.

Mosley said he can't make 142 lb either, and asked Roach why Pacquiao's can't fight him at 147 lb as he did against Oscar dela Hoya last December.

"Mosley is not Dela Hoya in terms of setting a weight handicap," said Roach in that Mosley would pose a lot of problems at 147 lb even if he's of the same age as Dela Hoya at 36.

Roach believes that Pacquiao is unbeatable at 140 lb, and

dragging the bigger boxers down should be to the advantage of the Pinoy pound-for-pound champion.

"It's really up to Manny at what weight he'd like to fight Cotto, if at all ... Manny might want to bring it down to 142," Pacquiao's Canadian adviser, Mike Koncz, was quoted as saying.

"This fight would mean more to Cotto than to Manny. If a limit of 142 is agreed, let Cotto struggle to make weight, not Manny," he told *The Star*.

Cotto is set to face Clottey for the WBO 147-lb title, and if he gets past this one a fight with Pacquiao, his stablemate at Top Rank, would be next in line.

Others who may be lined up against Pacquiao are the comebacking Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Juan Manuel Marquez, the stubborn Mexican. They square off on July 18 in Las Vegas at 147 lb.

Again, the winner of that fight should be considered next in line for Pacquiao, but that may come early next year – or unless Cotto sticks to his announcement that it's 145 lb or nothing.

Or he could be playing hard to get.

"Now Cotto is on record that, superfight or no superfight, he won't go lower than 145, and though some may think this is mere posturing for the eventual negotiation, I tend to think he'll stick to that number," wrote sportingnews.com.

Fighting Cotto at 145 lb could turn out to be a nightmare for Pacquiao, and Roach won't let that happen. ■

Globetrotters promise to wow RP crowd

by ALEXANDER VILLAFANIA
Inquirer.net

MAKATI—"We'll put on a show you'll never forget."

This was the message of Sweet Lou Dunbar, the coach of the famous basketball comedy exhibition team Harlem Globetrotters. Dunbar is in the Philippines with the rest of the Globetrotters for the Philippine leg of their Asian tour.

Dunbar said the Philippines is special to him since he was here around 20 years ago as a player for the team. Now that he is coach, he said the Filipino fans of basketball will see great ball handling techniques and comedic acts that would amaze fans and make them laugh.

"There's going to be the same styles that we showed to fans in the Philippines 20 ago, plus more. The guys we have now move faster, jump higher, are more skilled, and they are better looking," Dunbar quipped.

Among other things, Dunbar said he remembered the Philippines its traffic jams, which he had not experienced before.

Among the members of the current Harlem Globetrotters tour group are General Grant,

Slick Willie Shaw, Hi Rise Brown, Big Easy Lofton, Flight Time Lang, Bull Bullard, Handles Franklin, Sweat Pea Shine, and their tallest player the 7-foot 3-inch Skyscraper Alleyne.

Flight Time Lang said that they have gotten funny reactions from their previous show in Singapore, noting that the country is well known for its huge basketball fanbase.

"Whenever I told people we're going to Manila, we get people's eyes getting wider and saying 'they're crazy basketball fans!' We're sure we'll enjoy our stay here."

And even if it's entertainment, being a Harlem Globetrotter is not always about just having fun but also continuously practicing to hone their ball handling techniques. General Grant said that it takes years and hard work of practice to reach their skill level.

The Harlem Globetrotters will be in the Philippines for a two-day show at the Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City. They will be facing off against their longtime "nemesis" the Washington Generals—who always lose just about every game. ■



Seven-foot-three Skyscraper Alleyne of the Harlem Globetrotters gets mobbed by fans after arriving in Manila. Photo courtesy of Inquirer.net

Billiards hits a downtrend, says SWS

by CYRILL BONABENTE
Inquirer.net

WHEN Efren "Bata" Reyes became the world 9-ball champion in 1999, the Palace opened its doors to him, with then President Joseph Estrada awarding the billiards "Magician" the Philippine Legion of Honor, Degree of Officer.

In stark contrast, about all fellow billiards ace Dennis Orcollo got on his homecoming on Monday, May 18—after beating the world's top-ranked pool player Ralf Souquet of Germany and winning a 10-ball competition in Las Vegas—was handshakes from a few welcomers and the warmth of the tropics.

The contrasting images seemed to boost the Social Weather Stations' finding that the popularity of billiards in the Philippines has waned the past three years.

An SWS survey conducted from Feb. 20 to 23 showed that out of the total adult population, the proportion of Filipino adults who played the sport at any time in the past six months (regular players) had fallen from 14 percent (seven million players) in September 2006 to 10 percent (5.8 million

players) last February.

The percentage of those who regularly watched billiards on television also declined, from 18 percent (9.5 million) to eight percent (4.8 million).

Men less enthusiastic

It was the men who lost more enthusiasm in playing the sport, the survey showed.

Of the 5.8 million adults in 2009 who played at any time in the past six months, 4.8 million are men or 17 percent of the adult male population. In the 2006 survey, it was 26 percent or about 6.5 million.

On the other hand, the percentage of female adults who played at any time in the past six months rose from two percent (about 500,000) in 2006 to four percent (one million) in 2009.

TV audience also down

Both men and women, however, lost interest in watching billiards on television.

The survey, conducted among 1,200 adults all over the country, has an error margin of plus-or-minus three percentage points.

Billiards had experienced a boom in late 1999 after Reyes' conquest in Cardiff, Wales. ■

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Shown: Kraftmaid Cross Creek Hanover Oak Kitchen; Corian Blaque Countertop with Beaded Edge and Integrated Sink, #30157 Price Pfister Single Handle Stainless Steel Pullout Kitchen Faucet, #99541 12-in. x 12-in. Rialto Tile, #181490 KitchenAid Artisan Stand Mixer, #200598 GE Stainless Steel Dishwasher, #273719 GE Stainless Steel Gas Range, #17885 Amerock Satin Nickel 1 3/8-in. Casual Knobs, #227048 Satin Nickel 3-in. Strap Pull, #323-3 Valapur Signature Colors® Eddie Bauer® Paint "Patina." *Lowe's received the highest numerical score among appliance retailers in the proprietary J.D. Power and Associates 2008 Appliance Retailer Study™. Study based on responses from 5,236 consumers measuring 5 retailers and measure opinions of consumers who purchased an appliance in the previous 28 months. Proprietary study results are based on experiences and perceptions of consumers surveyed in June-July 2008. Your experiences may vary. Visit jdpower.com. For the store nearest you, call 1-800-953-4415. © 2009 by Lowe's. All rights reserved. Lowe's and the globe design are registered trademarks of L.T. LLC.