

DATELINE PHILIPPINES

Roach: We're at 40 percent

by ABAC CORDERO
Philstar.com

BAGUIO CITY – For the second day, Shawn Porter pushed Manny Pacquiao around the ring and left a clear impression that the Filipino icon is far from tip-top shape heading toward his Nov. 14 bout with WBO welterweight champion Miguel Cotto.

Even Freddie Roach, the chief trainer, wasn't satisfied with the way his boxer handled the 21-year-old junior middleweight from Ohio during their sparring session on October 1 at the Shape Up Gym packed with mediamen and Pacquiao fans as well.

"I'm not completely satisfied because he leaned on the ropes too much. He played a little bit for you guys," Roach told a bunch of scribes who took a 250-km ride from Manila to get a glimpse of Pacquiao's training camp, now on its second week.

"But it happens," said Roach of Pacquiao's tendency of putting up a show for his fans. "I have to close the gym down. But that's part of his character. That's part of Manny Pacquiao. He got hit a little too much. His timing is not there yet."

Roach was asked where Pacquiao, considered as the best boxer in the planet on October 2, is right now.

"Forty percent – yeah," said Roach who watched from the corner as Porter, younger, bigger and heavier, caught Pacquiao with good right leads, a couple of straights to the face, and left jabs very similar to the ones Cotto has in his arsenal.

Pacquiao tried to make it appear he was taking it in stride, and a few times landed good shots of his own, including a three-punch combination at the end of his two rounds of sparring with the 21-year-old Porter, undefeated in 10 fights as a pro.

Porter, who gave Pacquiao three tough rounds the other day, was a 2007 National Golden Gloves champion. He was an alternate on the US Olympic team to Beijing last year. All these credentials speak well of him so far in this training camp.

"His (Pacquiao's) performance on October 2 isn't the way he's gonna beat Cotto. But

that's part of the process. That's part of training camp and that's why we're here. That's something we're working on – to get him ready for the fight," Roach said.

Pacquiao did two more rounds with Mexican Urbano Antillon, and did a little better than when he had Porter in front of him.

After the sparring, Pacquiao worked the speedball, the ropes, hit the mitts with Roach and shadow boxed for six rounds.

Told that he was giving Pacquiao a hard time, Porter simply said, "Well, I'm just trying to."

Pacquiao's Canadian adviser said it certainly helps having

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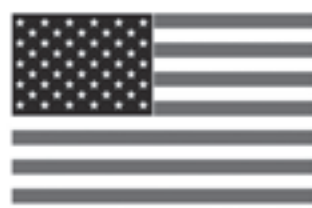
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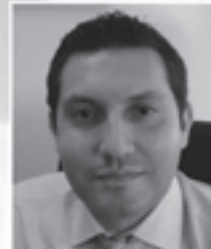
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