

Manny sneaks out for brisk workout

by ABAC CORDERO
Philstar.com

HOLLYWOOD— Manny Pacquiao hates lazy Sundays.

Ordered to stay home and rest, the Filipino superstar left his apartment very early in the morning, and with a tight crew went to Pan Pacific Park for a 30-minute run, including some wind sprints, shadow boxing and 1,200 crunches/sit-ups that would have made any ordinary athlete faint.

Pacquiao is already in tip-top shape for his coming fight with Ricky Hatton in Las Vegas on Saturday, and his conditioning coach, Alex Ariza, had wanted him to take it easy and not overdo things.

"Alex wanted me to stay home, and skip running. He was afraid I might over-train," said Pacquiao.

"*Kaya nag-nakaw ako* (I ended up stealing some workout). *Ayaw na nila ako patakbuhan talaga, sobra-sobra na daw* (They didn't want me to go out and run because it's been too much)," he added.

Pacquiao said weight is not an issue even if his last fight against Oscar dela Hoya last December was at 147 pounds. He did not say how much he weighs now.

"There's no problem with the weight. I will be at 140 and 145 on the day of the fight will be fine," added Pacquiao who weighed in at 142 and climbed the ring against Dela Hoya at 148 1/2 pounds.

Pacquiao said he left his apartment at 6:30am and was done with everything after more than an hour, just enough for him to catch the 8:30am Mass at the nearby Christ the King Church.

At around noon, he welcomed a horde of friends inside his apartment, most of whom were there to take part in the "weight-loss challenge" put up by the boxer three weeks ago.

Pacquiao will close out his sparring Monday at the Wild Card Gym. Freddie Roach should be back in charge after being away for three days and manning Gerry Peñalosa's corner in Puerto Rico the other night.



Manny Pacquiao

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Pacquiao, based on the plan, will do four rounds to close his total rounds of sparring to 149, just about the same number he's done in equally big fights against Juan Manuel Marquez, David Diaz and Dela Hoya.

It's all part of the tapering off barely a week to the fight, and two months after the training began.

"We just have to maintain things. Sweat it out, go through the motion," said Pacquiao who leaves for Las Vegas in the afternoon. There's a customized bus ready to take him to Sin City but the boxer may opt to board his Lincoln Navigator for the 300-mile journey.

The formal welcome ceremony for Pacquiao in Las Vegas will take place at the MGM Grand on Tuesday at 11:30 a.m., and Hatton, training in Vegas for almost three weeks now, will take his turn at 1:30 p.m.

Hatton will do a very brief media workout shortly after the formalities. Friday, May 1 is the official weigh-in.

Notes: Only 56 of the 74 survivors passed the final test in Manny Pacquiao's weight-

loss challenge where losing 10 percent of one's body weight in three weeks was rewarded with \$3,000 (or roughly P150,000). A total of 84 persons signed up, but 10 of them called it quits as the days went by. Mike Koncz, the boxer's Canadian adviser, was in strong contention for the \$10,000 top prize for the "biggest loser." Pacquiao stepped out of his bedroom at noon carrying the official scale, and stashed somewhere was the \$200,000 in cash that he was ready to give away... There are butterflies in the stomach of Jinkee Pacquiao, the boxer's wife. Days into the fight, she said she can feel all the pressure because she knows that Ricky Hatton is one tough cookie. "In all my husband's fights I felt this way, too. I think it's just normal. But of course I'm confident that he'd win. It's just getting scary as the fight nears. I know Ricky Hatton is strong, too," said Jinkee who will have Pacquiao's mother, Dionisia, sitting near her at ring-side. It's the first time the boxer's mother came to see him fight in the US. Will she bring luck? The question remains. ■

JDV: Erap still loved by masses

by EVA VISPERAS
Philstar.com

CALASIAO, Pangasinan— Once presidential rivals but now, no less than Pangasinan fourth district Rep. Jose de Venecia Jr. said former President Joseph Estrada who defeated him in the 1998 elections is still loved by the masses.

De Venecia said when he came here for the inauguration of a technical-vocational school that "many lower middle class and the AB groups of Philippine society are strongly committed to Erap."

He said about two weeks ago, Estrada invited him and his wife Gina to go around with him in Metro Manila during his sorties and he saw how strong he remains.

"The pro-Erap sentiment is still quite strong," he said.

He said Estrada is still loved as a leader of the opposition,



Former President Joseph Estrada

adding that he thinks the former President who is being reported to run anew in the 2010 elections for president, "can help unite the diverse groups within the opposition."

De Venecia recalled that it took

almost 30 days before then President Fidel Ramos was proclaimed by Congress as president. The same was true for President Arroyo, he said. But when he was the speaker of the House even if he lost to Estrada, he proclaimed him within one day because he wanted to set an example in Philippine democracy.

Lakas will be dismembered but after President Arroyo exits in 2010, the party will reunite, he said.

He said many had signified to him their plan to leave the party, adding that "to stay with GMA is a kiss of death."

De Venecia said for 2010, what will most likely happen is that the smaller political parties and the larger opposition parties will coalesce into a powerful anti-GMA coalition that will ensure the victory of the opposition in the coming election. ■

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told secretariat officials to look for rooms at the Batasan.

The officials said they have suggested that leaders of the chamber who are presently occupying two rooms should give up one to accommodate the additional party-list representatives.

Among those with two rooms are Nograles, Majority Leader Arthur Defensor, the six deputy speakers—Amelita Villarosa, Pablo Garcia, Simeon Datumanong, Eric Singson, Raul del Mar, and Arnulfo Fuentesbella, Minority Leader Ronaldo Zamora, and the chairmen of various committees.

Nograles and his colleagues have offices as officers of the House and committee chairmen, and separate offices as congressmen and congresswomen.

Secretariat officials have also suggested that the House eject the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population Development (PLCPD), a private advocacy group that has a 6th-floor office at the Batasan main building.

Palparan hits back

In a related development, retired Major General Jovito Palparan defended himself last April 28 from criticism that as a newly proclaimed party-list representative, he does not represent a marginal sector.

"I represent people involved in the conduct of security and peace and order, especially in the hinterlands. These are the barangay tanods, Cagfus (Citizens Armed Force Geographical Units), security guards, and retirement military personnel. I also represent peasants in these communities," said the lone representative of a group called Bantay.

He said he would work to uplift the "economic condition" of the people he claims to represent.

Palparan has come under fire from militant House members led by Satur Ocampo of Bayan Muna for not being a marginal sector representative.

Bayan Muna and other activist groups are blaming the retired general for the disappearance or killing of tens of their members, some of whom are still missing. They have labeled him "The Butcher."

He said he is not a cold-blooded killer and is ready to reach out to Ocampo and his other critics.

"I can in fact sit with them, I have no problem

with that. I don't know about them," he said, noting that he would be seated not far from Ocampo if the seating arrangement were by alphabetical order.

But it's not only the militant lawmakers who are making a fuss about Palparan's inclusion in the House.

Members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) last April 28 voiced their objection to his inclusion, as well as the sister of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, to the roster of the House of Representatives.

Emeritus Bishop of Novaliches Teodoro Bacani told CBCPNews, the official news service provider of the CBCP, that he has "serious reservations" on the appointment of Palparan to represent the Bantay party-list group.

"Palparan has already been rebuked by the Melo Commission for his human rights violations and I do not know what sense there is in putting in Congress a man who is notoriously reputed to be a human rights violator," he said.

Bacani also aired his concern over the SC's decision to allow Ma. Lourdes Arroyo to sit in Congress.

She is the nominee of Ang Kasangga, representing the sector of small entrepreneurs such as *balut* vendors, and will be the fourth Arroyo to sit in Congress.

"Being a member of the Constitutional Commission during President Aquino's time, our idea of party-list representatives should represent underprivileged groups and somehow should be identified with the underprivileged groups," Bacani said.

Bacani was one of the members of the 1986 Constitutional Convention.

Pampanga Auxiliary Bishop Pablo Virgilio David, on the other hand, said that the Catholic Church is against political dynasties. "This is obvious already."

But Malacañang appealed to the critics of the two to allow them to serve their constituents as party-list representatives.

Deputy presidential spokesperson Lorelei Fajardo pointed out that the people elected the party-list groups and not the individuals, so the two nominees should be allowed to serve their constituents. ■



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