

Pacquiao, Hatton shine on the red carpet

by JOSEPH PIMENTEL
AJPress

HOLLYWOOD—It was an arrival fit for Hollywood stars.

The Pride of the Philippines Manny Pacquiao and the Pride of Manchester Ricky Hatton walked down the red carpet along Hollywood Boulevard in front of the Roosevelt Hotel, with flash bulbs blinding their eyes and the sounds of fans cheering them on.

More than 200 exuberant people lined the streets of Hollywood on March 30, Monday night to witness the first of what will be many upcoming promotions for the Pacquiao vs. Hatton fight scheduled for May 2 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

“This is big,” said Golden Boy CEO Richard Schaefer, who had just finished talking to guests Academy Award nominee Mickey Rourke, and actor Mark Wahlberg, who were in attendance. “This fight is Hollywood big.”

Dubbed the Battle of East and West, Pacquiao, the pound-4-pound king, and Hatton, the 140-pound Lightweight champion, were overwhelmed by the large turnout and the ritzy red carpet opening.

“I’m glad to be here tonight,” said Pacquiao. “It’s my first time to be here on a red carpet. There are so many people here. I’m surprised. Maybe there are a lot of people who love boxing in this area.” If the Pacquiao vs. Hatton championship fight matches

the excitement at the Roosevelt, fans should expect a good brutal fight.

During the press conference, Hatton and Pacquiao admitted to a pool of reporters that neither of them is going to back down once they step inside the ring.

“The style of both of us kind of looks similar,” said Pacquiao. “There’s going to be a lot of action in the ring. You never know who is going to win that night.”

“Pacquiao is not going to back down,” added Hatton. “I’m not going to back down.”

Most boxing pundits and analysts are predicting a Pacquiao win. Many of the pundits, after watching Pacquiao’s dismantling of Oscar De La Hoya with speed and relentlessness believe that Hatton’s slow and power style lends itself for an easy Pacquiao victory. Even Pacquiao’s trainer Freddie Roach is predicting a quick and easy 3rd round knockout.

“If he fights like he has in the past, bullying in, Manny is going to knock him out,” said Roach.

However, Hatton and his trainer Floyd Mayweather Sr. said that Pacquiao is vulnerable to damaging attacks especially to the body.

Mayweather Sr., who was booed during the introduction by

the primarily pro-Pacquiao crowd at the Roosevelt, said that he’s convinced if Pacquiao comes charging in as he has in so many fights, Hatton will take him down.

“He’s [Pacquiao] been shaken up before,” said the loquacious Mayweather Sr. to the *Asian Journal*.

“He’s the only guy [who is] going to go backwards in this fight. You watch Pacquiao, and he makes a lot of mistakes defensively. I predict a body shot will get him.”

Mayweather Sr., who once trained De La Hoya, still does not give credit to Pacquiao for beating his former protégé.

“I wasn’t part of that fight,” said Mayweather Sr., who declined to train De La Hoya for the Pacquiao fight because he focused training Hatton. “What Pacquiao did was beat a shell of De La Hoya.”

Hatton said that Pacquiao need to be aware of his power and his newfound speed. At times, Hatton seemed frustrated and defensive by a number of reporters who question the Englishman’s speed, or lack thereof inside the ring.

“They [the boxing pundits] said



Manny Pacquiao and Ricky Hatton take a break to read the Balikbayan Magazine during their presscon at the Roosevelt Hotel in Hollywood.
AJPress Photo by Miko Santos

I wasn’t going to out jab Paulie [Malignaggi],” said Hatton of his win against the New Yorker Malignaggi. “But I out speeded him and out jabbed him in the fight. Just look at the numbers.”

Hatton added that training with Mayweather Sr. has helped him in the speed department.

“I invite all of you to watch me train,” he said. “Just see how fast I am, how explosive I am and with better head movement now.”

“Manny is quite easy to hit,” Hatton continued. “He’s been shaken up a few times in his last fights. I hope he’s improved. I hope his body and chin [has improved] has because he’s going to be fighting the biggest man he’s ever fought before.”

“It’ll surprise you to see how fast I am,” said Hatton.

Pacquiao gave a quick laugh when a reporter asked him about Hatton’s speed.

“All I can say is that speed will be part of this fight,” said Pacquiao. “What I know is that I’m faster than him but he believes he’s faster than me so what can I do?”

With about five weeks remaining until the fight, Pacquiao and Hatton are preparing for what may be a historic match.

A win for Pacquiao would net him a fourth world title in a fourth different weight division. Hatton would finally be considered for the pound-4-pound champion title.

Neither man is going to back down. No matter what happens on May 2, boxing fans are only expecting one thing—a Hollywood ending. ■

ACLU: Immigrant detainees held in cramped, dirty basement

LOS ANGELES—Immigrants held by the federal government are being detained in a squalid basement where conditions are foul-smelling and dirty, a civil rights group said in a lawsuit.

Upward of 200 detainees are at times crammed into temporary holding rooms in the basement of a downtown federal building, with as many as 60 immigrants in each room, according to the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California, which filed a lawsuit against Immigration and Customs Enforcement late Wednesday, April 1.

The allegations center on an area known as B-18, designed to hold immigrants on a temporary basis for processing after they are arrested by ICE agents.

“The conditions at B-18 are barbaric and unconscionable,” ACLU immigrants rights’ director Ahilan Arulananthama said. “There’s no drinking water except for in a sink next to a toilet, which people have to use without soap.”

ICE said in a statement it does not comment on pending litigation, but noted that Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano has called for a comprehensive review of the nation’s immigration detention practices.

ACLU lawyers said they did not see any of the conditions de-

scribed in the lawsuit first-hand. Rather, the ACLU said its findings come after extensive interviews with dozens of immigrants.

Based on its interviews, the ACLU said the holding facility has no beds and immigrants are not supposed to be kept there for more than 12 hours at a time. On occasion, immigrants have been kept there for up to 20 hours in a day or forced to sleep on the floor, the lawsuit alleges.

Detainees end up in the basement for a range of reasons. Some are in the country illegally, while others arrived with a visa and overstayed, or are claiming asylum. Some are felons fighting deportation after completing prison terms.

The holding rooms typically contain one or two non-private toilets, one sink and no soap or sanitary products, the ACLU said, and conditions are foul-smelling and dirty.

ACLU attorney Marisol Orihuela said sometimes women who are menstruating are denied sanitary supplies and some immigrants were denied access to their medicine.

Suvorova said she was arrested Dec. 24 for overstaying her tourist visa. She is now free on bail and said she feels optimistic about fighting her deportation but still has nightmares about her stay in B-18. (AP)

From hospitals to hospitality

PAGE A1 ◀

And even as the costs of airfare and accommodation are added to the hospital bill, the expenses incurred are still very minimal. The average cost of seeking treatment in destinations like the Philippines ranges from \$20,000 to \$70,000, a far cry from the price of medical treatment in the West.

Patients avail of the most innovative procedures in the country at a fraction of the price, and this, at the same time, boosts the Philippines’ medical and tourism sectors.

Durano predicts that in five to 10 years, the industry will be “ten times bigger than what it is today.”

“[Health tourism] just requires a little push and the moment it gains momentum, it will have a life of its own,” he added.

Tourism Usec. Cynthia Carrion also shared her forecast. “If we continue what we started, by 2012, we’ll have as much as \$3 billion.”

The world’s best

Health tourism places Philippine medical and cosmetic treatment on equal footing with the world’s best. The 4th World Health Tourism Congress, which was recently hosted by the Philippines, steers the country in the right direction.

“It’s just one of those sectors where we have that natural competitiveness,” Durano said.

Filipinos, after all, comprise the thousands of health care professionals working all over the

world. The Philippines is proving it is indeed a force to reckon with. The country’s top hospitals and wellness clinics converged with international medical tourism providers to address patients’ hospital and travel needs.

Nurturing, healing

Other Asian countries such as Singapore, South Korea and Thailand have made their mark as pioneers in the industry, since the advent of medical tourism in the late 90s.

It is, however, the nurturing character of the *Pinoy* that carves out the Philippines’ niche in the global health tourism market. The Filipino culture of nurturance, according to Durano, “humanizes medicine.”

Carrion also believes the Filipino idea of wellness is holistic and spiritual.

“When a Filipino massages you with the *hilot*, it’s not only a relaxing massage, it’s also therapeutic. It’s healing you,” she explained.

“They come here and after vacationing they come back and they look younger,” Carrion added.

Beyond the usual postcard idea of relaxing in a tropical destination, health tourism sets foreign patients and *balikbayans* on the road to wellness faster, as the experience is immersed in the nurturance and prayerfulness of Filipinos.

And as the undersecretary pointed out, “We have to let the world know about it.” ■

LWUA’s Pichay to create water bank

PAGE A1 ◀

country but still 755 municipalities have no water systems.

Pichay said the plan is to establish 50 additional water districts until 2010.

The LWUA is responsible for the government’s potable water projects nationwide and extends credit and financial assistance for various projects in water districts, which include engineering studies and design improvement.

LWUA was previously under the Department of Public Works and Highways, but President Gloria Arroyo transferred it to the Department of Health last August 2008. ■

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