

PACQUIAO WATCH: The mad dash for Pacquiao

Contributed by Edwin G. Espejo / MindaNews
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GENERAL SANTOS CITY (MindaNews/8 Nov) -- As expected, everybody is lining up for a megabuck fight with Filipino boxing icon Manny Pacquiao after Juan Manuel Marquez did his part of the bargain in handing Rocky Juarez a neat boxing lesson last November 4.

Bereft of big-money fight in the super featherweight division, Marquez, who held Pacquiao to a controversial draw in March 2004, has repeatedly called out Manny's name. Even trying to get under the skin of Manny by saying the latter is ducking him. Well, what better way of whetting up the appetite of fight fans. After fighting for a motley crowd of little under 3,000, Marquez wants to have another shot at HBO's pay per view offerings which only a Pacquiao date could provide him. The catch is, Marquez wants the bigger slice of the pie. And it may be his one way of saying "I'll only fight Pacquiao if the price is right." He once turned his back for a \$750,000 rematch against Manny just months after their controversial draw only to fight Indonesia's Chris John for peanuts. He lost that one and his featherweight crown. He has since gotten back on track and, at 34, desperately needs the Pacquiao fight to solidify his stature as one of the best featherweights in the world today. Will Pacquiao oblige? Manny is taking his sweet time. His recent struggle with the weighing scales is well chronicled within Team Pacquiao. Manny has six or so fights still ahead of him before calling it quits. Choosing who will be his next opponent is a luxury he earned by fighting the best featherweights and junior lightweights over the last four years. Pacquiao will definitely agree to a rematch with Marquez. Whether Marquez is next in line or any other marquee fighter is a choice Team Pacquiao is now mulling over. But economics will largely dictate who Pacquiao is going to trade leather next. A \$5 million guaranteed purse for a 15 March 2008 Marquez rematch might just entice Manny. The truce forged between Oscar de la Hoya's Golden Boy Promotion and Bob Arum's Top Rank has affected Manny's take home pay if his bouts are co-promoted by the two outfit. Unless offered a good deal, a fight with either Juan Diaz or David Diaz at 135 pounds may be more lucrative than a Marquez match up as the latter is under Golden Boy Promotion contract. Sorry folks but Manny has already reached such stature that any card featuring him will largely depend on the zeroes and the commas that appear in the contract. That's the reality of boxing. And Manny is not running from good hard fights, either. Do I hear Manny saying, "Show me the color of your money"? (Edwin G. Espejo was formerly editor-in-chief of SunStar General Santos.)