

By JOSEPH G. LARIOSA

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CHICAGO, Illinois (*JGLi*) – If Floyd Mayweather, Jr. and company are really sincere in questioning the use of Manny Pacquiao of performance enhancing drug (PED), why don't they take the matter up to the Nevada Athletic Commission?

The lawyers of Filipino pound-for-pound champion hurled this challenge to Mayweather, Jr. and his promoters to stop “false statements of fact about Pacquiao to achieve their sole malicious objective, which was to destroy the reputation of the Filipino superstar. None of their statements were made before nor directed to the Nevada Athletic Commission or any other governmental body.”

In raising the ante of his lawsuit against Mayweather Jr., his father, Floyd Mayweather, Sr., his uncle Roger Mayweather, his promoter, Oscar de la Hoya, owner of Golden Boy Promotions, and De la Hoya's assistant, Richard Schaefer, Pacquiao turned his lawsuit into punitive as the defendants continued to malign his reputation even after he filed the lawsuit before the United States District Court of Nevada in Las Vegas last Dec. 30.

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In filing an amended complaint, demanding a jury trial, last March 17, Mr. Pacquiao raised the amount of damages he initially asked the court to award him by asking “in excess of \$5-million. Furthermore, because defendants’ conduct was undertaken in bad faith and with fraud, malice, and oppression, Pacquiao is entitled to punitive damages.

“The defendants are jointly and severally liable for all the conduct and damages alleged therein,” according to his Las Vegas lawyers Eric D. Hone and Franchesca Van Buren on behalf of Los Angeles, California lawyers Daniel M. Petrocelli and David Marroso.

The lawsuit originally sought “in excess of \$75,000” in damages, when it was filed a few months after Pacquiao beat Ricky “Hit Man” Hatton last May. Hatton’s trainer, Mayweather, Sr., “directly asserted” during the Grand Rapids Press interview that “Pacquiao used performing-enhancing drugs.”

Even after the publicity following the filing of the lawsuit, the suit alleged that on “Jan. 24, 2010, Roger Mayweather stated on a popular boxing radio show, ‘[Pacquiao] is on A-side meth (methamphetamine, a central nervous stimulant), that’s what the f*** he’s on.’ ‘It is called the A-side meth.’”

Mayweather Barking Up the Wrong Tree, Says Manny Pacquiao - MabuhayRadio

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On March 4, 2010, at a press junket for his upcoming fight, Mayweather, Jr. stated that “Pacquiao’s got the power pellets, yo, and the steroid juice. Pacquiao got the power pellets you know.”

In a 13-page copy of the documents filed in court, as obtained by this reporter that comes in the heels of his unanimous decision win over Ghanaian Joshua Clottey at the Cowboys Stadium in Dallas, Texas, last March 13, Pacquiao’s lawyers also included the additional accolades Pacquiao received after filing the original complaint.

The lawyers mentioned that Manny Pacquiao is the world’s top “Pound for Pound” professional boxer. He holds a record of 51 wins--38 by knockout—with only three losses. Pacquiao is undefeated in the last five years, rattling off 12 straight victories in 11 world championship bouts, including eight by way of knockout.

Pacquiao is one of the most decorated boxers of all time: Fighter of the Decade (2000-2009) by Boxing Writers Association of America; Ring Magazine’s “Fighter of the Year” in 2006, 2008, and 2009 – the first three-time winner of the award. (De la Hoya owns Ring Magazine); 2006, 2008 and 2009 “Fighter of the Year by the Boxing Writers Association of America – only Muhammad Ali and Evander Holyfield have been similarly honored; 2009 Sports Illustrated “Fighter of the Year.”

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In a poll sponsored by HBO, fans voted Pacquiao “Fighter of the Decade”: Only boxer in history to win world titles in seven different weight classes; And only boxer in history to win the so-called ‘lineal championship’ – beating a boxer universally acclaimed as the best in the class – in four different weight classes; and “Five-time Philippine Sportswriters Association ‘Sportsman of the Year.’”

One of the most – if not the most – popular boxers fighting today, Pacquiao was also described as “much more than a boxer. *Time Magazine* named Pacquiao one of the world’s most-influential people in 2009, for his success in the ring and his influence among the Filipino people.

Forbes Magazine listed Pacquiao as the world’s sixth highest-paid athlete, with a total earnings of \$40 million from the second half of 2008 to the first half of 2009.”

A star in recording and in an upcoming movie in his native Philippines, Pacquiao is an “icon of the masses” and “one of the nation’s heroes who can unite us even in times of divisiveness” and the first Filipino athlete featured on a Filipino postage stamp.

Prior to the events giving rise to this case, before and after his fights—Pacquiao has never tested positive for any performance-enhancing drug. He passed the Nevada Athletic Commission’s drug tests at least 10 times.

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The lawsuit also described Floyd Mayweather, Jr. as an accomplished boxer. "He is a former "Pound for Pound" champion and also was named Ring Magazine's Fighter of the Year." He is undefeated and had twice announced his retirement from boxing, only to return to the ring for lucrative matchups.

In an interview with Keith Kizer, executive director of the Nevada Athletic Commission, last midweek, Mr. Kizer confirmed to this reporter that Mr. Mayweather has not yet formally requested the commission that it conduct an Olympic-style blood test to ferret out steroids from boxers fighting in Nevada. The commission only conducts urine test.

"If Mayweather makes the requests, the commission would certainly consider it." Kizer said.

The scheduled March 13 bout between Pacquiao and Mayweather was scrapped when the boxers could not close the gap for the timing of the blood test. Manny wanted it 24 days before the fight while Mayweather wants it 14 days before the fight. (lariosa_jos@sbcglobal.net) # # #

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