



Manny Pacquiao connects with a left to the face of Timothy Bradley at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas on June 9. (Photo by Chris Cozzone)

MANILA — The man who has been involved in promoting big-time professional boxing for over 45 years with lords of the ring is on the record for choosing Manny Pacquiao as the greatest fighter ever next to Muhammad Ali.

Top Rank chief executive officer Bob Arum, 80, recently revealed his list of 10 greatest fighters in the London publication "Boxing News' 100 Greatest Boxers of All-Time." With quotes from Arum, the top 10 showed, in order, No. 1 Ali ("the greatest"), No. 2 Pacquiao ("blinding speed and power"), No. 3 Sugar Ray Leonard ("great composure and talent"), No. 4 Marvelous Marvin Hagler ("consistently splendid"), No. 5 Roberto Duran ("the greatest at lightweight, great at higher weights"), No. 6 Joe Frazier ("best pressure fighter"), No. 7 George Foreman ("most powerful puncher"), No. 8 Alexis Arguello ("superb technician"), No. 9 Julio Cesar Chavez ("best

body puncher ever”) and No. 10 Carlos Monzon (“huge middleweight, virtually unbeatable”).

Curiously, Arum’s honor roll consisted only of fighters who ruled the roost only during his involvement with boxing.

The Harvard Law School cum laude graduate from New York was an attorney in the U.S. Department of Justice and became interested in the fight game starting in 1965.

He played a key role with Don King in staging the “Thrilla In Manila” between Ali and Frazier in 1975.

Among those whom Arum promoted were Oscar De La Hoya and Floyd Mayweather, Jr. who were absent in his top 10 roster.

Arum promoted Mayweather from 1996 to 2006.

After he was thrust into the limelight, Mayweather broke out of Arum’s camp and decided to promote himself.

It was the same experience with De La Hoya who divorced Arum to set up a rival promotions outfit Golden Boy.

Boxing News’ list of 100 Greatest Boxers of All-Time situated Pacquiao at No. 42 behind No. 41 Mayweather but ahead of No. 71 Mike Tyson, No. 77 Bernard Hopkins, No. 78 Juan Manuel Marquez, No. 79 Marco Antonio Barrera, No. 80 Erik Morales, No. 86 De La Hoya, No. 89 Pancho Villa (the only other Filipino in the century roster) and No. 96 Sugar Shane Mosley.

Boxing News’ top 10 cast named No. 1 Sugar Ray Robinson, No. 2 Ali, No. 3 Henry Armstrong,

No. 4 Joe Louis, No. 5 Leonard, No. 6 Duran, No. 7 Harry Greb, No. 8 Jimmy Wilde, No. 9 Willie Pep and No. 10 Archie Moore.

Here's what Boxing News said of Pacquiao: "He's moved up effortlessly through the weights, from flyweight to welterweight, inflicting damage and famous defeats at every stop along the way. Pacquiao has thrilled fans the world over with his all-action style and he has captured the imagination of his countrymen who worship the man who has claimed some form of title recognition in an incredible eight weight divisions. They say crime stops in the Philippines when he fights as everyone comes together to watch him in action and it's then when the punishment — in the ring — begins.

"Pacquiao has spent most of his best years with promoter Arum and trainer Freddie Roach in his corner. His relationship with Roach is more father-son than pupil-teacher and the images of Roach and Pacquiao together, whether it's in Freddie's Wild Card Gym in Los Angeles or in training camp in the Philippines, have become some of the most iconic of the modern era.

"The bespectacled former fighter and the Filipino phenom have made an unlikely alliance but trainer, master tactician and the man with the game plans and the fighter they call 'Pacman' combined to lead the pound-for-pound ratings alongside the biggest name he has not faced, Mayweather."

Several Filipino ring legends went missing in the Boxing News honor roll like Flash Elorde, Luisito Espinosa, Ceferino Garcia and Gerry Peñalosa.

So far, there have been seven Filipinos to win world titles in at least two weight classes — Pacquiao, Espinosa, Gerry and Dodie Boy Peñalosa, Nonito Donaire Jr., Brian Vitoria and Donnie Nietes.

Villa, who died in 1925 at the age of 23 while reigning as world flyweight champion, made it to the Boxing News list.

"Pancho Villa had a relentless attacking style, throwing punches from all angles which endeared

him to fans and promoters,” wrote Boxing News.

“He fought exclusively in his home country from 1919-22, losing only two fights and winning the Orient flyweight and bantamweight championships. When he tried his luck in the U.S., his style made him an instant success. His big chance came when he was chosen by promoter Tex Rickard to challenge the great Jimmy Wilde for the world flyweight title. Wilde was no match for the hard-punching Villa who attacked relentlessly and knocked out the Welshman in the seventh round, making him the first Filipino (and Asian) to win a world title.”

Villa was the Pacquiao of his era. A buzzsaw in the ring, Villa had a devil-may-care attitude and enthralled audiences with his go-for-broke style.

He died of Ludwig’s Angina, a glandular disease caused by infected teeth or gums leading to virtual strangulation, a month away from his 24th birthday.