

# Good big man will typically beat good small man

By Huel Washington  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

A person doesn't have to be a rocket scientist to know that any wagers on a little boxer coming up in weight to battle a bigger and heavier champion had as much chance of winning as someone hitting the Lotto and Megabucks on the same day. What was really needed were a few Hail Mary's or some help from above.

Historically, David conquering Goliath, and Jack and the Giant in the Beanstalk, have encouraged the ultimate fight fan to believe, in some cases, that adverse obstacles in a fighting opponent, like height and weight, can be overcome with speed and versatility.

With that thought in mind, thousands of fight fans from the Philippine Islands and other bettors wagered large sums of money that Manny Pacquiao, moving up from the featherweight division, could defeat Erik Morales from Tijuana, Mexico, in the super featherweight fight at the MGM Grand Garden Arena last weekend.

Thousands of boxing enthusiasts, including a few high political officials, made the trek from the Islands and from highly Filipino populated areas, like Daly City in the San Francisco Bay Area, to swell the Garden's attendance to 14,626.

On the day of the March 19 fight, the betting on Pacquiao was so heavy that the odds on Morales began at plus 125 in the morning and increased to plus 160 by that night about fight time. They went from minus 175 to minus 145 favoring Pacquiao.

In an exit poll conducted by Fred Sternburg prior to the bout, 54 writers picked



## SPORTS PACE

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Morales to win the fight while 52 picked Pacquiao with one draw. Jim Jenkins of the *Sacramento Bee* who has been covering boxing in Las Vegas for years had picked "Pacquiao by decision."

Although Morales seemed to dominate the fight from the opening round, all three judges gave that round to Pacquiao, but the media disagreed. The judges seldom agreed on the remaining 11 rounds but each gave Morales seven of those rounds while Pacquiao was given only four.

Morales was so pleased the way he was handling his elusive opponent that he switched from right-handed to southpaw in the 11th and 12th rounds.

"I wanted to have a little fun," Morales said after the bout was over. "He is [a] good fighter, but he never hurt me at any time during the fight."

Pacquiao sustained a bad cut over his right eye in the third round from what appeared to be a clash of heads followed by a punch, and on the way to the hospital for stitches, he said, "I did the best I could. I gave my best effort. I would like a rematch."

Maybe he would, but his loss only followed the pattern in boxing matches that has become prevalent in Las Vegas over the past few years.

Earlier this month, Julio "The Kidd" Diaz, gave up his IBF lightweight title and fought two-time lightweight champion Jose Luis Castillo

at the Mandalay Bay Resort Casino. Although Diaz was listed as a lightweight, he actually fought most of his bouts as a featherweight.

That bout was simply a mismatch. The already heavier Castillo, who actually came down in weight to

get to 135 pounds, won seven of nine rounds before knocking Diaz out in the tenth round. Diaz won only two of the rounds on the judges' card.

Even the "Golden Boy" Oscar De La Hoya, coming up from 154 pounds to 160, found out that size matters when he fought Bernard Hopkins for his title. Hopkins won in a ninth round TKO with a left hook to the ribs of De La Hoya.

"He was too big and too strong," De La Hoya said af-

ter the bout was over. "I couldn't move after being hit so hard by a bigger fighter."

Not even the so-called invincible Shane "Sugar" Mosley, who went up from his welterweight 147 pounds, could defeat Rodney "Winky" Wright in their two 154 pound bouts. Wright was just too big for the smaller Mosley.

The underdog, or the smaller fighter, might be the sentimental favorite — and there have been champions who moved up in weight and

won titles — but reality favors the bigger guys.

The Pacquiao camp left wanting a rematch. Morales said it's alright with him. But just like Wright and Mosley, the winner will be the same. David beat Goliath years ago and he outsmarted him. But most of today's little men aren't smart enough to beat the bigger opponents, or so it seems. By the way, this writer picked Morales and has the slips to prove he knew who the better, or bigger, fighter was.

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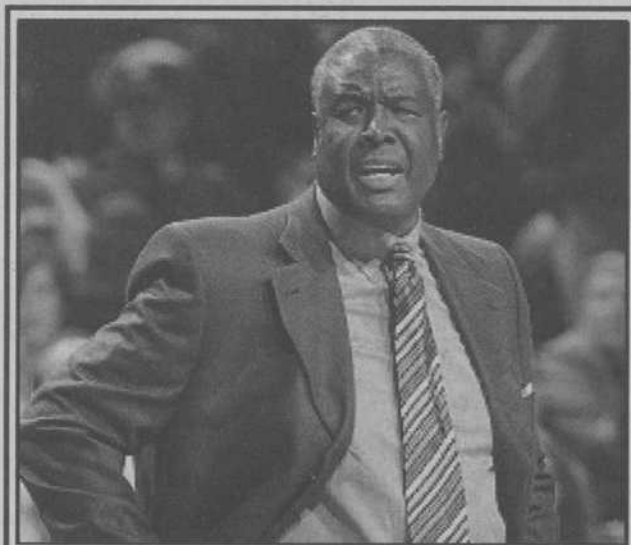


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## SILENCED SILAS

Paul Silas was fired as coach of the NBA's Cleveland Cavaliers on Monday, his team fighting for a playoff spot after leading its division earlier this year. As a coach, he had a record of 355-400 with the Clippers, Hornets and Cavaliers. Silas' Hornets teams (both in Charlotte and New Orleans) went 13-16 in the playoffs.

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