

Mayweather's talent, mouth on center stage

Ever since he was a small tyke in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Floyd Mayweather Jr. has been trying to convince boxing enthusiasts that he is the best boxer to arrive in this current generation.

Forget about Oscar De La Hoya, who is trained by Floyd Mayweather Sr.; or Bernard Hopkins, who has set a record for defenses in the middle weight division; or upcoming undefeated super middleweight champion Jeff Lacy, who won a medal at the 2000 Olympics.

This weekend in Atlantic City, Mayweather Jr. defends his super lightweight title against Arturo Gatti, and he gets an opportunity to display the skills he inherited from a boxing clan whose name has been synonymous with outstanding fighters for years.

"I am the best of the lot," said the 28-year-old former 1996 U.S. Olympic team member. "I can do every thing they could do and more."

His learning began early from his father, a contender who fought Sugar Ray Leonard and Marvin Stallings at Madison Square Garden.

His current trainer, Uncle Roger Mayweather, was two-time world champion, who is the trainer of Laila Ali, the only women's champion with a title belt, and Uncle Jeff Mayweather, who is also a trainer of several prominent fighters.

Mayweather Jr., who lives in Las Vegas and trains at Top Rank Gym has issued challenges to De La Hoya, Cory Spinks, who was recently dethroned, and Zab Judah, the newly crowned welterweight champion.

"I'll beat each one of them."

One of his most outstanding displays of talent was his annihilation of Diego Corrales, the junior light-weight champion, who recently defeated Jose Luis Castillo in a battle which has been called the Fight of the Year.

Against Mayweather Jr., Corrales was completely out-classed and floored five times. Junior won on a TKO.

Each time, Mayweather Jr is asked about his upcoming bout with Gatti, he has derided his opponent as someone who has had a tremendous publicity campaign in the East but has mediocre talent.

Going into the contest, he hasn't predicted a knockout, but he thinks he is so-supe-



SPORTS PACE

By Huel Washington

rior to Gatti that the winner has been predetermined already and Mayweather Jr. will have his hand raised in victory.

"Gatti is a bum," he said. "How many fights has he lost? Six? I think I have lost only six rounds in my last fights."

According to Floyd Mayweather Jr., fight fans haven't seen anything yet.

"I'll show them some real boxing this weekend."

WIMBLEDON OPENS THIS WEEK

Thirty years have passed since Arthur Ashe, Jr., legendary African-American tennis pro pioneer, won the Championships at the Wimbledon.

Ashe defeated American Jimmy Connors in four sets, 6-1, 6-1, 5-7, 6-4, by mixing up his shots to the hard hitting opponent.

Since that time Malvia Washington, from Jacksonville Fla., has been the only African-American to reach the Wimbledon finals, losing to Richard Krajicek in straight sets 6-3, 6-4, 6-3, in 1996.

Meanwhile, on the distaff side, Venus and Serena Williams have blossomed on the grass and won the championships four times, with the younger sister defeating the older one the last two times they played in the final match.

Last year, Serena Williams was the favorite but folded in the finals against (See Sports Pace, Page 16)

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