



SAN FRANCISCO MAYOR Willie Brown, right, points to the place where Floyd "Pretty Boy" Mayweather will defend his title Saturday.

KARL MONDON/TIMES

Fighters enjoy fanfare in San Francisco

■ Mayweather will put his super featherweight title on the line against Chavez on Saturday

By Jay Heater
TIMES STAFF WRITER

SAN FRANCISCO — Professional boxing is back. Indeed.

On the steps of City Hall on a pristine Thursday morning, San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown raised his arms, flexed his muscles and showed off a robe with "DA MAYOR" emblazoned on the back.

An ambulance siren wailed in the background as noted lawyer and promoter Bob Arum stood at a podium chiding U.S. immigration officials for allowing terrorists into the country while deporting a Mexican athlete who

had lived here for most of his life.

Then someone else told a story about a vicious dog confronting a terrified boy. All the time, guys named "Pretty Boy" and "El Matador" were listening close by. A couple of scantily dressed women in spike heels — picture them carrying numbers — looked on, as did a couple of San Francisco's finest, who were wondering what all the excitement was about.

Arum, who guided Muhammad Ali through several of his most important fights, has brought this brutal and sometimes zany form of entertainment to San Francisco. Saturday night, Arum's most coveted fighter, WBC super featherweight champion Floyd "Pretty Boy" Mayweather, defends his title against Jesus Chavez at the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium.

HBO will televise the bout live to 120 countries.

It was Chavez who was booted out of the United States when he applied for his driver's license in Austin, Texas, in 1997. Chavez, who moved from Chihuahua, Mexico to Chicago at age 5, served 3½ years in prison for his role in a robbery as a teen-ager. He was deported upon his release but sneaked back across the border and began living in Austin in 1994. He then continued his boxing career until he was deported again.

Last November, the INS granted Chavez a non-immigrant visa. On Feb. 8 he received his permanent resident status. While fighting those personal battles, Chavez continued to win in the ring, compiling a 35-1 record that

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FIGHT NIGHT BY THE BAY

■ **WHAT:** Professional boxing on Saturday at the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium in San Francisco. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., bouts begin at 6 p.m.

■ **WHO:** WBC super featherweight champ Floyd Mayweather (26-0) defending his title against No. 1 contender Jesus Chavez (35-1); five other bouts.

■ **ALSO:** Manny Pacquiao (33-2) vs. Agapito Sanchez (33-7) for the IBF super bantamweight championship.

■ **TV:** Live on HBO, telecast begins at 7:15 p.m.

■ **TICKETS:** Available at door, by calling 415-392-4400 or on the Internet at tickets.com

Sports Editor Jerry Micco
925-977-8591 • jmicco@cctimes.com
Assistant Sports Editor Dave Belli
925-977-8592 • dbelli@cctimes.com
High school sports Steve Trosky
925-943-8076 • strosky@cctimes.com

Johnny Oates ailing

■ The former Texas Rangers manager is diagnosed with a serious brain tumor. Page 2

Barry needs polish

■ Ex-Warrior Rick Barry gets top guests on KNBR, but he stumbles in his interviews. Page 2

Coaches come home

■ Mike Bellotti and Ron Turner attended Shrine Games as youths. Now they'll coach in one. Page 3

Worth a look

Golf: Franklin Templeton Shootout, FSN, 10:30 a.m.
■ It's time for the "Silly Season" and what's more silly than two-man golf teams. Page 4

Boxing

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vaulted him to the WBC's No. 1 ranking.

Chavez's fight against Mayweather (26-0) was supposed to be held in Las Vegas on Oct. 6, but Mayweather had to have his wisdom teeth pulled. The bout was expected to be rescheduled in Las Vegas, but the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks caused many tourists to cancel trips there. Casinos laid off employees and turned away from booking expensive entertainment.

Thus, Arum turned to San Francisco, which had been fed a few boxing appetizers earlier this year by local promoter Peter Howes. Howes, Arum and HBO sorted out the details, and the next thing you know Mayweather was slipping a robe over Brown's shoulders in front of a gaggle of television cameras.

After Brown welcomed the fighters, Mayweather's uncle and trainer, former two-time world

champion Roger Mayweather, told a story of his own childhood. He and his friend would run through an alley every day, and his friend tossed rocks at a chained dog. One day the chain broke and the dog confronted his tormentor. The boy was terrified.

Roger Mayweather said that will be the case when Chavez faces his nephew in the ring Saturday night.

"When Chavez couldn't get across the border (into the United States), he was saying that Floyd didn't want to fight him," Roger Mayweather said. "Well, on Saturday night, you are going to see self-destruction at its finest. This guy ain't fooling us."

He then glared at Chavez. "Who are you?" he snapped. "I can't imagine how you got into the Top 10?"

Roger Mayweather then turned toward the media. "He's already prepped, they just ain't put the dirt on him yet."

Chavez was asked what he thought of Roger Mayweather's comments. "I laugh," he said.