

McGregor open to boxing again

Las Vegas

Conor McGregor placed himself on a potential collision course with his mixed martial arts paymasters after refusing to rule out further boxing bouts following his defeat to Floyd Mayweather on Saturday.

The charismatic Irishman, a two-time Ultimate Fighting Championship world champion, performed creditably before eventually being stopped by boxing legend Mayweather in the 10th round at the T-Mobile Arena.

McGregor, 29, could pocket as much as \$100 million from Saturday's fight, eclipsing his entire career MMA earnings in a single night's work.

While McGregor ended up being comfortably beaten by Mayweather, the MMA star -- who had never boxed in a professional bout before Saturday -- said he was open to continuing in the ring.

"I enjoyed the fight, it was a great contest," McGregor said. "People ask me what's next, I'm not quite sure. I've multiple titles in the UFC to think about."

"I could also continue in the boxing game...I have many options in mixed martial arts. I'm sure there'll be options in boxing. Right now I'm a free agent."

Many in the boxing world had



Conor McGregor

questioned whether McGregor's bout with Mayweather, which is on track to become the richest fight in history, should even have been sanctioned.

McGregor revealed after the fight he had been stung by the criticism of the boxing establishment.

"There was a lot of disrespect and a lot of disregard for my skill," he said.

"I was a little bit taken aback by the disrespect and the disregard that was shown. But I always knew that when the fight came around I'd give a good account of myself," added

McGregor, who was competitive in the early rounds before being dominated by Mayweather.

One obvious boxing bout on the horizon for McGregor could be against sparring partner Paulie Malignaggi.

Malignaggi has spent the build-up goading McGregor publicly, creating a grudge-match narrative that is likely to appeal to fans.

But any plans McGregor has about continuing his flirtation with boxing are likely to be opposed by UFC chief executive Dana White.

White, who was instrumental in helping set up the Mayweather fight, said he would prefer to see McGregor return to the world of cage-fighting -- and stay there.

"I would rather he did not," White said when asked if he wanted McGregor to continue boxing.

"This is not what he does. He's a mixed martial artist. He goes in and he fights and he uses all of his weapons. Tonight he goes in and is only able to use his hands. I don't think he has anything else left to prove. I would rather he fights mixed martial arts."

White emphasized that McGregor's bout with Mayweather was a one-off, which had built its own momentum due to the status of the two fighters as the kings of their respective crafts. (AFP)

Irish media praise McGregor's endurance

Dublin

Irish media hailed Dublin's Conor McGregor for a gritty display yesterday following his 10th-round loss to Floyd Mayweather in their Las Vegas super-fight.

The pundits focused on the mixed martial arts star's endurance and bravery in managing to stay upright for 10 rounds with an opponent of Mayweather's calibre, particularly as it was his first bout in a boxing ring.

"This was, after all the hype and trash talk, a man entering a new sport and taking on the best and while it was a comfortable win for Mayweather, McGregor has been lauded for the effort he put in," wrote *The Irish Independent*.

Online sports website *Joe* also talked up McGregor's ability to hang in, having been clearly outclassed after the first three rounds.

"There was to be no almighty shock, but McGregor earned plenty of respect (as well as a helluva lot of money) and can walk away from the encounter with his head held high," it said.

Other crumbs of comfort were to be found in tabloid newspapers, who knew their readership would be firmly backing the former plumber from the wrong side of the tracks who has enjoyed a meteoric rise to stardom.

"Conor McGregor landed more punches on Floyd Mayweather than Manny Pacquiao -- in two fewer rounds," noted the *Irish Sunday Mirror*. (AFP)

I felt obliged to put on a show

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Mayweather also said he had felt obliged to "put on a show" after being accused of contributing to an underwhelming spectacle in his 2015 "Fight of the Century" against Manny Pacquiao.

On that occasion Mayweather was accused of being overly cautious, cagily keeping Pacquiao at arm's length en route to a comfortable win.

"I could have made it boring. I didn't want to do that," Mayweather said. "I felt like I owed the fans a last hurrah. So I went out there and that was the game plan. I wanted to go out with a bang."

Mayweather insisted that his legacy as one of boxing greats would remain intact following his controversial meeting with McGregor, which had been panned by many in boxing.



Highlight from the fight

"After 21 years, I've had some great fights, I had boring fights," Mayweather said. "But at the end of the day I'll be remembered as a winner."

"I know how to dissect my opponent, break them down and stick to the game plan."

Asked if there was any chance he may yet return to the ring, he replied: "You won't see me getting in the ring no more. So any guy calling me out -- forget it." (AFP)

McGregor awed by clinical Mayweather

Las Vegas

Conor McGregor saluted Floyd Mayweather's clinical boxing masterclass Saturday -- but insisted he felt he could have fought on beyond a 10th round stoppage.

The 29-year-old Irish mixed martial arts star began bravely and won the first three rounds but was ultimately outclassed by the vastly more experienced Mayweather.

Afterwards McGregor, who had never boxed professionally before Saturday's bout at the T-Mobile Arena, praised Mayweather's composed demolition job.

"He's composed, he's not that fast, he's not that powerful, but boy is he composed in there," McGregor said.

"I thought it was close though and I thought it was a bit of an early stoppage. I was just a little fatigued. He was just a lot more composed with his shots."

"I have to give it to him, that's what 50 pro fights will do for



Boxer Floyd Mayweather Jr. (R) and mixed martial arts star Conor McGregor compete

you." But McGregor, a world champion in the brutal world of the Ultimate Fighting Championship, maintained that he should have been allowed to fight on past the 10th.

"I've been strangled on live TV and came back," McGregor said.

"When you're in here in the squared circle, everything is different. Let the man put me down, that's fatigue, that's not damage." (AFP)