

Jose Rivera Tired Of Being Boxing's Best Kept Secret

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WORCESTER, Mass. (January 27, 2005) – Boxing's best-kept secret is World Boxing Association "regular" welterweight champion Jose Antonio Rivera (37-3-1, 24 KOs), who hasn't fought in more than 1 ½ years since he captured the WBA title by defeating previously unbeaten (36-0, 18 KOs) Michel Trabant in Berlin.

An unfortunate series of events have kept Rivera inactive. First, he was mandated by the WBA to make his first defense against No. 1 contender Thomas Damgaard, who passed on the fight because of family problems (his father was sick and passed away). Rivera was granted permission to fight one voluntary defense and he was matched against Ricardo Mayorga last March. Mayorga, however, came in 6 ½ pounds overweight and their match was cancelled. A ruptured tendon in Jose's right thumb postponed his October 2 mandatory defense against Damgaard (34-0, 26 KOs).

"We still don't know when the fight is going to happen," Rivera's manager Steve "Tank" Tankanow said. "DKP won the purse bid and both fighters are ready. We understand how difficult dates are to come by. We have been penciled in for April 2, but we do not have 100-percent confirmation, yet. Jose had surgery and was medically cleared to fight in mid-January. He's been training for his first title defense and even postponed his honeymoon so it wouldn't interfere with camp. Jose prides himself on being a fighting champion and it's been hard for him to train for a fight with changing dates and nothing signed."

The 147-pound division may be the best and most competitive in boxing this year with Cory Spinks, Zab Judah, and Antonio Margarito, hot prospects led by Kermit Cintron, Oscar De La Hoya and Shane Mosley dropping down, and possibly Kosta Tszuyu and Miguel Cotto moving up.

Rivera believes he should be in line for a high profile fight against one of the aforementioned welterweights, but the clock is ticking and he does have to get past Damgaard first.

"Mosley's warning all the welterweights that he's going to be a monster," Tank continued. "Well, Jose Rivera is the monster tamer and after he knocks out Damgaard, Jose will be ready to take on all comers. DK is talking about matching the winner of Spinks-Judah II against Mosley, De La Hoya or Tszuyu, but, according to WBA rules, Jose is the mandatory defense and the Spinks-Judah II winner has to defend against Jose before September 13. There shouldn't be a problem making that fight because DK is the promoter for all three fighters (Rivera, Spinks and Judah). First, though, we have to win our mandatory defense against Damgaard."

WBA Rule: "The SUPER CHAMPIONS will be obliged to make the mandatory defense of their titles in a period no longer than 18 months against the boxer recognized as the World Boxing Association Champion of the corresponding division."

"All Jose wants to do is fight. We understand the economics of boxing and realize that marquee

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names sell tickets. Jose Rivera is very marketable. He's a role model who is fluent in two languages (English and Spanish) and his life story could be made into a movie. If Jose finally gets an opportunity, he will become a big name because he's a great fighter with a great story to tell. Unfortunately, not many people have gotten a chance to watch him fight. He won the title in Germany a year ago last September and to no fault of his own, he hasn't fought since. Jose wants boxing fans all over the world to judge whether or not he's a world-class fighter. All we're asking for is a fight date to prove it. Jose doesn't want to be boxing's best kept secret anymore."