

Junior Welterweight 'Mighty' Mike Arnaoutis to face Santa Cruz

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Cestus Management's junior welterweight sensation "Mighty" Mike Arnaoutis finally has a name for his latest challenge: Roberto Santa Cruz.

With eleven wins against only two defeats, Santa Cruz will no doubt prove to be a stern test for the fiery Hellenic warrior, who will be defending the WBO-NABO light welterweight crown he captured by stopping Jesse Feliciano inside a single round. Adding even more significance to this bout is the fact that with this contest, "Mighty" Mike will become the first fighter in the history of the popular program to fight four consecutive bouts on the Showtime Network's ShoBox: The New Generation series.

Although many fight fans refer to Arnaoutis only as "The Greek," a more appropriate title may be that of the "Fastest Hands in the West," as this bout will be "Mighty" Mike's third straight appearance at the Chumash Casino in Santa Ynez, California. Originally from Athens, Greece, Arnaoutis makes his second home in Atlantic City, NJ, but it's been west coast boxing fans sitting ringside for his last two bouts. A California crowd saw him stop the aforementioned Feliciano, and the same crowd returned to catch his third round demolition of former California State light welter king Juaquin "Killer" Gallardo. A third straight sellout crowd is expected at the Chumash on February 18, a testament not only to the consistent quality of the Gary Shaw Productions cards staged at the beautiful location, but also to the growing popularity of the undefeated Greek quickdraw artist.

Says Cestus Management's Advisor Mike Michael, "We're glad to see the fight fans picking up on our kid and the noise he's making in this division. The fact that 'Mighty' Mike can fight in California, in Baltimore, in Atlantic City and anywhere else in the country and still draw a sellout crowd speaks volumes about how exciting our boy is to watch. He truly is a born fighter, and we think he's going to be one of the biggest stars in the sport of boxing."

Michael also had some words on Arnaoutis' competition, Roberto Santa Cruz. "Truthfully, the only things we know about this guy are that he has eleven wins, two losses and his father's last name was Santa Cruz. Beyond that, we're going to have to get in the ring and find out. Our first opponent, Michael Warrick, pulled out of the fight with a rib injury, so now the first look we'll be getting at this Santa Cruz will be at the weigh-in."

The "Athens Assassin" took a moment to share his thoughts.

"I've done this before," says Arnaoutis. "I had a hundred and ten amateur fights, and in the amateurs you hardly ever get to see who you're going in with before the fight. I fought international champions, great fighters, and I hardly ever knew what to expect. All I know about this guy is one thing, and that's the only thing I need to know: He's not a better fighter than I am, and he can't beat me."

Arnaoutis vs. Santa Cruz will be broadcast live from the Chumash Casino in Santa Ynez,

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California on Friday, February 18, 2005 at 11pm EST. The Showtime Network's ShoBox: The New Generation series will air the telecast.