

## Costa Rica Has a Boxing Beat

Written by Joey Knish

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Tucked way down south of the United States is a hotbed of boxing activity. It's not quite the Mecca of boxing legends that Mexico is, but it is home to some tough talented fighters. Central America is a gathering of small countries – Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama – which make up the distance between Mexico and South America.

Within these borders you will find many hungry fighters with visions of grandeur hoping to be realized by the riches of our sweet science. Because of the fact that great fighters are not a required ingredient in the recipe to make great fights, boxing is thriving in Central America, particularly in Costa Rica.

While Costa Rica hasn't earned the pugilistic reputation that famous fighters have brought to other neighboring countries, such as Panama, that is all set to change. The sport and business of boxing started to take off a few years ago when Ricardo "El Matador" Mayorga thrilled locals with his brazen attitude and brawn. Mayorga, born in Managua, won WBA and WBC regional titles (Fedelatin and Fecarbox) junior middleweight titles while fighting in Costa Rica. He adopted Costa Rica as home although stayed true to his native Nicaragua. Fans took to Ricardo like a savior as the brawler entered the ring to the "Los Fabulosos Cadillacs" infectious song "El Matador." Mayorga had the people coming out to the fights and out of their seats while he was in the ring, and while he is gone, the fans have remained faithful to the sport.

Now, thanks to local television broadcasts, the internet, and the management of local company Promobox, boxing in Costa Rica is growing at a healthy rate. With a commitment to bring two competitive shows each and every month, boxers from neighboring countries are finding the San Jose (Costa Rica's major city) a place they can call home and earn a living. Economically it simply makes sense as boxers gain the exposure they require (bouts are televised here as well as live on the internet at [www.theboxingchannel.com](http://www.theboxingchannel.com)) and are able to stay active fighting monthly, or more, in Costa Rica).

Typical fight nights involve local "ticos" (as Costa Rican natives are known) as well as boxers from Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Colombia and Panama. We have also seen some top talent out of Mexico (12-0-1 Juan Carlos Salgado fought Berman "La Cobra" Sanchez to a draw here in his last bout) and even the occasional American (heavyweight Thomas Hayes improved to 24-1-0 with 17 KOs with a knockout victory administered by three knockdowns, all left hooks, as he escaped the cold of Chicago for a bout this past week in sunny Central America). Up in the United States people also seem to be paying attention.

The fight card held last week at the San Jose Palacio Hotel had its main event fall through as local heavyweight Carl Davis Drummond, 9-0 (9 KOs), inked a deal with Hollywood, Florida-based Warriors Boxing Promotions and was pulled from his scheduled bout as plans get underway for him to gain exposure stateside. The Costa Rica native is making up for lost time due to his incarceration and was extremely active with nine fights last year. But when you knock

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out all of your opponents, those nine fights might only add up to 14 rounds, as was the case with Drummond.

The possibility of signing with a company such as Warriors and becoming the next Mayorga is what fuels the dream for many boxers. And finding the next Mayorga or Drummond may also be why well-known agent/advisor/manager Robert Middleman was spotted at the most recent show.

Fighters such as Henry Porras, Humberto Aranda, Francisco Campos and Mayorga have all helped pave the way for the current breed of fighter in Costa Rica such as Carl Davis Drummond and Henry Saenz. There are many exciting young fighters emerging out of Costa Rica with Nelson Lara, Aristides Calderon and Berman Sanchez among the notables leading the pack, while former world title challenger Aranda (who has fought Javier Castillejo, Thomas Damgaard, Raul Marquez and Kermit Cintron) still claims a spot in the hearts of local fight fans.

Twice each month The Boxing Channel will broadcast fights live to the internet from Costa Rica as Anthony Torres and I proudly bring you the action from ringside. We witnessed some good fighters put on great fights in the past year and look forward to another year of progress and development on the local boxing scene. To be part of that excitement, be sure to join us at [www.theboxingchannel.com](http://www.theboxingchannel.com)