

Panchito's Coming Back

Former contender Francisco "Panchito" Bojado returned to Southern California after spending several months in New Mexico where he worked with other boxers and members of Ultimate Fighting Championship.

"I spent some time with some of those guys but I'm anxious to get back to boxing," said Bojado, 22, whose last bout took place July 24, 2004 against Jesse James Leija. "I'm coming back to the ring and I'm ready to go."

The East Los Angeles prizefighter rose in jackrabbit fashion with scintillating knockout wins; the first nine opponents were belted out. But most of those opponents were junior lightweights or lightweights. Once he ventured into junior welterweight territory he began to find stiffer chins in the 140-pound limit.

Bojado's first loss came against Juan Carlos Rubio, a tall junior welterweight with the solid chin and devil-may-care attitude most Mexicans possess. Though he avenged that loss, it showed the speedy East L.A. fighter had reached a threshold where connections by his left hook and right cross did not finalize a bout.

The loss to Leija seemed to sour Bojado to boxing altogether.

"I shouldn't have lost that fight," said Bojado (16-2, 11 KOs), who had been trained by Floyd Mayweather Jr. a few weeks prior to that fight. But a contractual obligation to Oscar De La Hoya meant Mayweather could not put the topping on the cake. In stepped Buddy McGirt, but they were two strangers in the ring.

"I've got Floyd Mayweather back," Bojado said happily. "As long as Oscar isn't fighting at the same time Floyd can work with me. It's going to work out fine."

Bojado seeks a fight this coming June and is currently looking for a promoter.

"I'm a free agent," he said, his contract with Main Events has now elapsed. "I'm looking at all options."

One option he has ruled out: fighting any heavier than 140 pounds.

"I'm going to stay below that," said Bojado. "The taller guys have moved out of the division."

Ironically, Bojado was last seen at a Golden Boy Promotions event.

"I'm talking to everybody. I'm taking my time," he said.

McCarter Wants Mrdjenovich

Layla McCarter, 26, considered one of the best female prizefighters in the world and a member of the pound-for-pound club, will be matched against Puerto Rico's Belinda Laracuente at the Sky Ute Casino in Ignacio, Colorado on April 1 if things work out. As always, female bouts tend to fall out.

It's been nine months since she faced Jelena Mrdjenovich for the second time. During that fight she suffered a horrible fractured arm just below the elbow. She continued on against the Canadian fighter and loss a unanimous decision. Four months earlier she beat Mrdjenovich convincingly.

"That's the fight I really want, I want Jelena," said McCarter (18-12-4) by phone. "We need to do it again."

That second fight was an eliminator for the WIBA super featherweight title and was held in Edmonton, Canada. Mrdjenovich is now the WBA junior welterweight champion.

"She won't fight outside of Canada," McCarter said.

Instead of waiting for the return bout, the Las Vegas-based McCarter opted to jump back in the ring despite the five-inch scar that trails down the inside of her arm.

"My arm is good, it's healed, it's ready. I've been ready for a couple of months but haven't been able to get any action. I was supposed to fight March 11 but they couldn't find an opponent," she said. "So we ended up with Belinda on a different date."

Laracuente jumped into fame with her skillful showing against Christy Martin back in 2000. Though she didn't win against the veteran world champion, it showed her ability to box.

"She is a good name fighter. I'm not making any money for this fight but I'm trying to get back in action," said McCarter, who is trained and managed by Luis Tapia.

But in the back of her mind, the former Washington resident penciled in the Canadian fighter for the future.

"They just don't want to fight again. We offered \$5,000 dollars, which was more than what they offered me up there. It would be the third fight. We're one and one. Anyway, she owes me one more so we have to do that," McCarter said of WBC junior lightweight title-holder Mrdjenovich's team. "They don't want to lose. They know they can't beat me with two arms. I went twice, cheap. If she comes to the U.S., I will just do it. I've fought two in her home turf. The third one should be here."

McCarter says after Laracuente, there are plans to meet Holly Holms the current IBA junior welterweight titleholder and then France's Myriam Lamare, the undefeated WBC and WBA junior welterweight titleholder.

Boxing Chatter

Written by David A. Avila

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World titles are at stake in those proposed fights, but revenge is her favorite dish.

“I want Jelena outside of Canada,” McCarter says with cold precision. “I don’t care how much I get, I just want to fight her a third time.”

Toney Hosting a fight card Thursday

James Toney’s boxing promotion company Lights Out Promotions in conjunction with Final Round Entertainment has a fight card this Thursday featuring Daniel Judah (20-1-3, 10 KOs) against Joseph “the Hungry Lion” Marwa (19-7-1) of Tanzania in a cruiserweight bout. The action takes place at the Marriott Hotel in Woodland Hills, California. The doors open at 6:30 with the first bout expected to begin at 7:15. For tickets or information call (818) 251-9717.

Expected to attend the boxing show in the San Fernando Valley are Toney himself, who has a date on March 18, with Hasim Rahman for the WBC heavyweight title in Atlantic City. Also, Zab Judah and family should be in attendance as well at the Woodland Hills show.

Heavyweight Jason Gavern out of Pennsylvania is also on the card. No opponent has been named at press time.

Augustus and Morua in Tucson

Emanuel Augustus (32-25-6, 17 KOs) faces Mexico’s Arturo Morua (22-7-1, 13 KOs) in a matchup between classic boxer versus unorthodox boxing genius at the Desert Diamond Casino on Friday March 10, in Tucson, Arizona. Don’t miss it. You’ll never see two better boxers with worse records than this pair. It should be a boxing clinic.

Augustus, perhaps one of the most underrated boxers in the lightweight and junior lightweight divisions, has that knack of making opposing fighters look pretty ridiculous. But not in his last bout against Colombia’s Jaime Rangel, a muscular puncher who traded bombs with Brownsville, Texas-based Augustus.

Though the bout ended in knockout, Augustus took some pretty heavy shots. He said he wanted a knockout so that the judges couldn’t rob him again.

Morua, a lanky fighter out of Guadalajara, had been riding a winning streak and had a shot at the WBC title if he could beat Naoufel Ben Rabah. He didn’t. He was flat and lost by decision in Las Vegas. Before that, he had beaten Omar Weis, Carlos Maussa, James Crayton and Jung Bum Kim in succession. That’s a pretty impressive streak.

We’ll see if Morua’s stand up boxing style can offset Augustus unique movement and sharp counters. It should be advanced boxing at its best.

For ticket prices call (520) 393-2799 or go to Ticketmaster.com

Woods Lauds Calzaghe

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IBF light heavyweight titleholder Clinton Woods sent his congratulations via press release to Joe Calzaghe the victor over Jeff Lacy in their super middleweight showdown last Saturday. Though he predicted a win by Calzaghe, his fellow countryman's performance exceeded expectations.

"I always knew Joe was going to win but I never had any idea that Joe would win every round like he did," Woods stated. "I think all of British boxing will be just as proud of Joe's win as I am."

Woods, who captured the vacant IBF crown with a fifth round knockout over Rico Hoyer a year ago, welcomes a match with Calzaghe.

"Before the Lacy fight, Calzaghe said that he thinks he deserves a straight crack at my title, without any other fights at light heavy. And I totally agree," Woods stated. "Joe's record speaks for himself and I'd be delighted to defend my title against him. I have my fight in May and then I have my mandatory against Glen Johnson (who has a draw and win over Woods), which is another huge fight in Britain."