Sumya “Island Girl” Anani Back in the Ring

IBA junior welterweight titleholder Sumya Anani, perhaps the most feared female prizefighter in the planet, meets Terri Blair on Saturday at the Grand Victoria Casino in Rising Sun, Indiana.

Anani’s recognition as one of the best serves more as a pariah rather than an accolade when opponents seem more willing to hide around the corner of the building than face the two-fisted punching machine.

“I’m not going to fight Sumya,” said Mia St. John, the IBA and IFBA lightweight titleholder whose last bout was against IBA junior welterweight titleholder Holly Holm last December. “She hits too hard.”

Other titleholders like Chevelle Hallback and Layla McCarter, are more than willing to meet Anani, but not for the pittance offered in the past.

“I’d love to fight Sumya Anani, but I want to be compensated for a fight like that,” said McCarter, who many feel may be the most skilled female boxer in the world. “What I’ve been offered before I can get fighting much easier girls. If the right offer comes I’d take it.”

Meanwhile Anani, 34, finds herself locked in boxing limbo offering monetary sacrifices, weight advantages and holding back massive frustration in her effort to find opponents in order to display her boxing ability.

“All these are ducking me: Jamie Clampitt, Holly Holm, Mary Jo Sanders,” Anani (25-1-1, 10 KOs) said, adding that there are many others. “I’ve tried the higher ranked girls and they are and have been artfully dodging me.”

Blair (6-10-2), her next opponent, does not duck anyone.

“Her record is deceptive,” Anani said of Blair. “She’s fought plenty of highly ranked girls, in their hometowns, and went the distance with them.”

The fighting Kentuckian has scrapped with Jessica Rakoczy, Holly Holm, Mary Jo Sanders, Kelli Cofer and Kara Ro in their backyards. It’s a Murderer’s Row that would make most other fighters go weak in the knees. Not Blair.

“She comes to fight,” Anani said, who trains and lives in Kansas City, Missouri.

Unlike others, Anani comes to fight too.

Though elite fighters like Lucia Rijker have avoided her. Not so Belinda Laracuente, Stephanie

Jaramillo, Lisa Holewyne and Jane Couch.

Against Holewyne at the Staples Center, Anani exploded on her with some pretty wicked left hooks. But the veteran Holewyne road out the explosions and was able to last the entire six round bout.

Perhaps Anani's greatest foe to date was the speedy Fredia Gibbs whose dexterity in the ring proved difficult to easily overcome. But alas, Gibbs retired a few years back after fracturing her wrist during the second fight between them at the Palace Indian Gaming Center in 2003. She never fought again. Gibbs and an Anani boxed to 10-round majority draw in Austin, Texas in 2001.

Time's running out for the "Island Girl."

"They're hoping to push me to retirement," said Anani.

Hopefully not until she meets the other titleholders. But for those fans in Indiana, it's a chance to see the most feared female prizefighter in the world.

"It hasn't been easy," she said.

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Vargas-Mosley II
It's not substantiated, but looks like Fernando "El Feroz" Vargas and Sugar Shane Mosley are heading for a rematch in July to possibly take place at the Staples Center. Vargas lost to Mosley in a hotly contested battle that ended because of a swollen eye that he feels was not impairing his vision. Up until the stoppage, Vargas was in the fight and Mosley looked pretty strong too. It was an offensive battle that saw both fire concussive blows on a regular basis. Vargas was especially effective to the body with some brutal shots landed throughout the 10 rounds it lasted. Mosley used his speed to work Vargas up and down. Had the eye not caused referee Joe Cortez to halt the fight, it could have easily been a very close decision for either fighter. "I didn't have a problem with the eye," said Vargas after the fight.

Baldomir and Gatti
Carlos Baldomir will be defending his WBC welterweight title against former WBC junior welterweight titleholder Arturo Gatti, according to Sycuan Ringside Promotions who promote the Argentine. It's official. This is the legitimate welterweight title since Baldomir handed former WBC, WBA and IBF welterweight champion Zab Judah a surprise loss. It's a perfect match for Gatti who would have trouble with any of the current welterweight contenders, but seems ideally suited for Baldomir. The title fight will take place on July 22 in Atlantic City.

El Raton
Jorge Paez Jr. was added to the March 24 card in Las Vegas. The Mexican lightweight sensation meets veteran Miguel Galindo (9-15) in a four-round bout at the Orleans Casino

promoted by Guilty Promotions. Paez, the son of the great Maromero Paez, doesn't fight like his father. The son is more of an aggressive assassin looking to end the fights quickly. With his quick fists and quick feet he usually provides a lot of problems for the opposition. But Galindo has fought experienced fighters before, including former world champion Manuel Medina who is also on the fight card.

Riverside, Ca. Prospect

Josesito Lopez, who was trained by the late Andy Suarez, will be fighting on the April 8 fight card as planned, but Mark Suarez has cancelled his bout set for the same fight card. Lopez will be assisted by co-trainer Henry Ramirez when he steps in the ring at the Thomas and Mack Center on Las Vegas to face Wes Ferguson, a speedy junior lightweight managed by Floyd Mayweather Jr. Mark Suarez, who is one of seven sons of Andy Suarez, was expected to fight on the card too and make a case for himself as a suitable opponent for the winner between Mayweather Jr. and Zab Judah who are fighting for the IBF welterweight title. Suarez is ranked number one. "It's a really hard time for Mark," said Ramirez, "as anyone can understand."

Barrera and Rocky

Marco Antonio Barrera will be fighting Rocky Juarez on May 20 at the Staples Center in Los Angeles according to various news sources. Barrera, who lives in Mexico City, had been scheduled to face IBF lightweight world titleholder Jesus Chavez of Texas. But the lightweight champ suffered an arm injury during preparation and was forced to cancel. Juarez fights out of Houston, Texas and lost his last fight by close decision to Humberto Soto. Barrera holds the WBC and IBF junior lightweight titles.

Speed Merchant

Rialto's Dominic Salcido, a junior lightweight prospect, recently signed a promotional contract with Thompson Boxing Promotions and will be featured in a co-main event at the Doubletree Hotel in Ontario on Friday March 31. He's trained by Joel Diaz who also prepares Julio Diaz and Antonio Diaz. Also on the fight card will be Timothy Ray Bradley in a junior welterweight bout. Both fighters are undefeated.

Sergio Mora Back

Contender champion Sergio Mora may be fighting in Las Vegas some time in early May, according to his manager John Montelongo. Mora, a native of East Los Angeles, has not fought since winning his rematch with Peter Manfredo Jr. in a middleweight match last October at the Staples Center. No opponent has been named but the date could be May 4. He's currently preparing in Montebello.

Kaliesha and Craven

Kaliesha West sparred with US Amateur champion Emily Kleinfelter last weekend to prepare for her second pro fight that takes place at the Fantasy Springs Casino in Indio on Saturday. "I can't wait," said West, a Moreno Valley resident who trains at the Redlands Boxing Club. She is scheduled to face Tonia Craven, a hard-slugging bantamweight out of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Craven's bout against Yvonne Chavez was televised. She has power in both hands.

Pacman and Larios

Manny Pacquiao reportedly signed to fight Oscar Larios some time in July, according to various rumors circulating. Because of civil unrest in the Philippines, a previous fight between Larios and Pacquiao was cancelled. But negotiations have renewed and the two may still meet in Pacquiao's homeland. It had been reported that Israel Vazquez, who scored a second round knockout over Larios a couple of months ago, was going to accept a fourth match with Larios.

Golden Boy Grabs Two Filipino Youngsters

Golden Boy Promotions signed two Filipino rising stars on Friday, according to Marylyn Aceves, spokesperson for the group. The boxers signed to promotional contracts are Z Gorres (22-1-1, 12 KOs) a junior featherweight out of the Cebu Province in the Philippines. His biggest win came against Glenn Donaire a year ago. Also signed was Rey "Boom, Boom" Bautista (19-0, 14 KOs), a bantamweight out of Candijay, Philippines. His biggest win came over Gerardo Espinoza last December in Sycuan Reservation. "The hottest talent pool in the boxing world right now is the Philippines," stated Oscar De La Hoya in a press release last Friday. "To bring exciting young fighters like Bautista and Gorres to the States to train and fight, is an important step in the development of our company."

In memoriam

Welterweight boxer Kevin Payne, 34, died Sunday of injuries suffered during his fight the night before in Evansville, Indiana. Payne had won a hard fought decision against Ryan Maraldo at the Centre, according to the Princeton Daily Clarion.

"It's directly related to the boxing match," Vanderburgh County chief deputy coroner Annie Groves told the Daily Clarion.

Though he won by split-decision he was assisted out of the ring and ambulanced to the Deaconess Hospital in Evansville. He died following surgery. Our condolences to the family, friends and fans of the brave Payne.