

Busy Week in Pro Boxing

Written by David A. Avila
Wednesday, 03 May 2006 19:00

Get ready for the busiest week in pro boxing.

Steve "The Mongoose" Quinonez is back, and with his little friend Jose Luis Cruz at Big League Dreams ballpark on Wednesday.

Well, Cruz is actually bigger than Quinonez, but the desert fighter is big among boxing fans in the Palm Springs area.

Quinonez faces the taller Ray Nahr (16-1, 14 KOs) while Mexico's Cruz faces former world titleholder Sharmba Mitchell at the Cathedral City ballpark on Wednesday, May 3. Some of the fight card will be televised by ESPN2.

After losing a close fight against former world champion Stevie Johnston in January, Quinonez is back in the ring. A year ago the desert fighter handed James Armah his first pro defeat. That happened on May 5, 2005. May has always been a schizoid type of month for the Mongoose.

Last year he beat Armah, in May 2003 he lost to Michael Clark. In May 2002 he won a decision over Luis Ugalde, but in May 2001, he was stopped by Mickey Ward. Maybe he's destined to win every other year. Maybe it's only on even years.

Regardless, Quinonez is ready.

"After I lost to Stevie Johnston I took a couple of weeks off then got back in the gym," says Quinonez (30-10-1) who has fought a list of boxers that would make other fighters cringe. Fighters like Jose Luis Castillo, Diego Corrales, Steve Forbes, Lovemore N'Dou, Jose Luis Juarez and Juan "Pollo" Valenzuela to name a few.

Nahr, a 6-foot tall fighter out of Ghana, hasn't lost a fight since Kid Diamond rocked his world in 2004. But now he's looking to make a statement on national television. Quinonez knows this.

"I had to take this fight or else I wouldn't be on television," said Quinonez, 35, who could have taken an easier opponent on the non-televised portion of the card. "My hands are tied. At my age I don't have time to wait around another year."

Luckily, he's had ample time and sparred perhaps the best fighter near his weight class in Julio "The Kidd" Diaz.

"Julio is almost the same size," said Quinonez, who sparred with Diaz several weeks. "He's a world class fighter."

Quinonez is a world-class fighter too. Though he's never won a world title, he's bagged several regional titles in a fight resume that few can match.

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In the main event, Mexico City's "Chelin" Cruz (31-1-2, 26 KOs), who suffered his first and only career loss against Sugar Shane Mosley, gets another opportunity against a former world champion.

Mitchell (56-5), the former WBA junior welterweight title-holder, lost his last match against Floyd Mayweather Jr. in a blowout. Now he faces the tough Mexican who endured 10 rounds with Mosley.

"Cruz was a real clever fighter," said Mosley two months ago. "He had this way of acting like he was firing a punch and would make you react, then the punch would come a blink later. It took me time to figure it out."

The first bout begins at 5:30 p.m. The Big League Dreams Sports Park is located at 33700 Date Palm Drive in Cathedral City. For tickets or more information call (760) 324-5600.

Contender fights in Las Vegas

The Aladdin Resort and Casino hosts "Latin Warriors" on Thursday May 4, featuring Sergio Mora, Alfonso Gomez, Miguel Espino and Jonathan Reid. Yes, Reid too.

"I'm an honorary Latino," said Reid (33-4, 19 KOs), who's been living in Montebello, Ca. preparing for this return to the ring after losing a close fight to Espino last year. "I've been working hard and Sergio and coach Dean Campos have been taking care of me."

Reid faces Ryan Davis (19-5-2) who lost to Carlos Bojorquez last year. In that fight, Bojorquez proved too aggressive for the boxing-minded Davis after a clash of heads caused a cut over the Mexican's eye. He saw red and went into a rage against Davis. Reid is calmer but has made some changes to his style with the aid of Mora's trainer Campos.

"I move around more," said Reid, who always stays within a few pounds of his fighting weight.

"The guy's like Bernard Hopkins, he's a freak," said Mora. "He's always in shape."

Also on the card will be Gomez facing Jesse Feliciano who is coming off a surprising win over Vince "Cool" Phillips. It should be a pretty rough match.

Mora meets the taller Archak "Shark Attack" Ter-Meliksetian (15-3, 12 KOs) in a middleweight bout scheduled for 10 rounds.

A lot of things have changed for Mora, but his intensity hasn't.

"I'm still the same guy," said Mora (17-0) who still lives in East L.A. with his mother and brothers. "It's just that more people are coming at me that I haven't seen in a long time. I don't have the same amount of time as I had before because I'm training. But I'm the same guy."

Mora, 25, has been sparring with quick-fisted Larry Mosley, who fights at welterweight.

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“Sergio Mora can fight inside or outside,” said Mosley.

Mora is looking for a victory to let people know he’s still out there.

Maywood fight card

Mexico’s Jose Luis Zertuche (18-2-2), the middleweight who knocked out Jesus “The Hammer” Gonzalez, meets Nicaragua’s Jose Varela (17-2, 12 KOs) in a 10 round bout on Friday May 5. The fight will be televised on Telefutura.

Giovanni Segura (13-0-1, 10 KOs), the heavy-handed flyweight prospect out of South Gate who stopped Francisco Arce and Juan Carlos Perez in a round apiece, gets to try out Valentin Leon (17-12-2, 8 KOs) of Colton. Segura, who is originally from Acapulco, has been raising heads with his go-for-broke style.

“He’s pretty good that kid,” said Lee Espinosa, who trains Julio Diaz.

For tickets and information call (323) 707-6770 or (323) 562-5020.

Coachella fight card

Venezuela’s 40-year-old Yobert Ortega (35-6-3) meets Ricardo Castillo (25-2), Jose Luis’s little brother, at the Spotlight 29 Casino in Coachella, California on Saturday night. Also on the card will be David Vasquez (17-10-3) meeting Priest Smalls (17-10-1). Vasquez returns to the ring after a two-year lay-off in a junior featherweight bout. The fight card is promoted by Julio Cesar Chavez and O2 Boxing. The first bout begins at 7 p.m., Ticket buyers will also be able to see Oscar De La Hoya fight Ricardo Mayorga on television. For tickets and information call (800) 585-3737.

Fights on television

Wed. ESPN2, 6 p.m., Sharmba Mitchell (56-5) vs. Jose L. Cruz (31-1-2).

Thurs. ESPN, 6:30 p.m. Sergio Mora (17-0) vs. Archak Ter-Melikesetian (15-3).

Fri. Telefutura, 9 p.m., Jose Zertuche (18-2-2) vs. Jose Varela (17-2).

Fri. Showtime, 11 p.m., Glen Donaire (15-2-1) vs. Cesar Lopez (18-2).

Sat. HBO pay-per-view, 6 p.m., Oscar De La Hoya (37-4) vs. Ricardo Mayorga (28-5-1); Kassim Ouma (23-2) vs. Marco Antonio Rubio (33-2); Joan Guzman (24-0) vs. Javier Jauregui (51-12-2); Jorge Arce (7-0) vs. Lowell Brownfeld (7-0).

Sat. Showtime, 9 p.m., Alex Garcia (25-1) vs. Jose Antonio Rivera (37-4-1).