

## Aussies! Vic Darchinyan Defends Title

Written by David A. Avila  
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Flyweights are the smallest of guys in the world of boxing at 112 pounds and less, but inside the ring they can dazzle with their speed. Sometimes a guy like Australia's Vic Darchinyan emerges with his knockout power and sparks the division.

Get ready to be sparked.

Darchinyan, the IBF flyweight titleholder, makes his fourth defense of the belt he captured against Irene Pacheco, a tall flyweight out of Colombia who defended it six times before running into the Aussie buzzsaw. Darchinyan meets Mexico's Luis Maldonado (33-0-1, 25 KOs) at the Thomas and Mack Center on Saturday. It will be televised on Showtime.

It's been three years since an opponent lasted all 12 rounds with Darchinyan. He likes it that way.

"It is very important to me to win by knockout," said Darchinyan (25-0, 20 KOs) who is also known as "Raging Bull."

See, it's the knockouts that get you noticed in the flyweight division. Not since Ricardo "Finito" Lopez has someone grabbed the attention of the casual boxing viewer. He did it with his surprising knockout power.

Darchinyan knows this.

"I am looking forward to this fight Luis Maldonado. He is a good, strong fighter," said Darchinyan, who is trained by the former Aussie great Jeff Fenech. "It is a very good opportunity for me. I have won a lot of my fights since winning the title by knockout."

Knockouts are his choice. He also wants to meet other titleholders like Jorge Arce who reigns supreme in the 112-pound class with his ability to end a fight by sudden knockout.

A proposed matchup with Arce was shrugged off by the popular Mexican prizefighter.

"I'm going up in weight," said Arce last month, who has struggled to make weight the last several fights. "There are a lot of good fighters I can meet at junior bantamweight like Martin Castillo and Jose Navarro."

Darchinyan was disappointed but might go up to a heavier weight class too.

"I was very unhappy. Maybe he (Arce) didn't want to lose his belt. I am looking forward to fighting all champions," Darchinyan said. "I am ready for super flyweight (115 pounds), I am ready for bantamweight (118 pounds) and I am ready for super bantamweights (122 pounds)."

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One thing he knows, knockout victories are the key to success.

“If you can show your power, people really love you,” said the Armenian boxer. “That is why I want to show my power.”

Flyweights are some of the quickest and slickest prizefighters in the sport, but even without Arce, the weight class has some pretty exceptional boxers like WBO flyweight Ivan “Iron Boy” Calderon, Lorenzo Parra, Omar Narvaez, and Giovanni Segura.

### Light heavyweights

An interesting contest takes place on Friday between veteran Eric Harding (27-3-1) and fast-rising Chad Dawson (22-0, 15 KOs) at the Chumash Casino on Friday. The match will be televised by Showtime.

It’s southpaw versus southpaw.

“Fights are not easy to come by for me so when you get an opportunity, you go for it,” said Harding, who has fought Roy Jones Jr. Antonio Tarver and others.

Both are acquainted with each other through sparring.

“I was a young fighter, 19 years old,” said Dawson, 23, about sparring with Harding several times. “My style has definitely changed in the last three years.”

Harding agrees.

“It was three years ago and sparring is a whole different world than being actually in there fighting without the headgear on.” Harding said.

In the light heavyweight division, southpaw fighters are in abundance so both feel confident about each other’s style, especially Dawson, who spars regularly with junior middleweight champion Winky Wright, a southpaw.

“I know what he does against Winky Wright in sparring,” said Dan Birmingham who trains both Dawson and Wright. “I mean the kid is ready and Eric Harding is going to find out.”

Harding has no choice but to take the toughest fights available.

“Every fight I fight is a must win for me,” Harding said.

The veteran has fought the best light heavyweights in his era including Roy Jones Jr., Antonio Tarver twice, Glencofe Johnson, Montell Griffin, David Telesco, Richard Grant, Demetrius Jenkins, George Khalid Jones and many others. The only light heavyweight of note he’s missed is Julio Gonzalez.

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Dawson, as young as he is, has proven to be willing and thrilling in beating some notables like Jason Naugler, Darnell Wilson, Carl Daniels and Ian Gardner. Against Gardner he proved he could fight a very awkward and defensive fighter bent on not fighting. The lanky southpaw with pop stopped him in 11 rounds.

It's basically the future looking at the present, or if Harding loses, at the past.

### **Johnny Tapia**

Johnny "La Vida Loca" Tapia will be signing copies of his autobiography on Wednesday, May 31, at Universal Studios City Walk in Los Angeles at 6 p.m. The book is called "Mi Vida Loca – The Crazy Life of Johnny Tapia" of course.

Tapia, who won world titles six times, also has a movie about his life currently in production by Jerry Bruckheimer.

Hopefully this means that Tapia has ended putting on the gloves. He had a glorious career despite all of the tragedies and problems in his life.

Tapia took part in several fights that were some of the best I've ever witnessed such as his clashes with Paulie Ayala, the match with Ricardo "Chapo" Vargas, or his eventual meeting with fellow New Mexican Danny Romero. Nobody had more energy and more enthusiasm than Tapia.

### **USA pay-per-view boxing**

Beginning on Tuesday June 6, at 9 p.m. Eastern Standard Time and 6 p.m. Pacific Standard Time, the first episode of USA Tuesday Night Fights takes place for the cost of \$14.95. The first episode of the boxing series called "Knockouts" will show Marco Antonio Barrera vs. Agapito Sanchez, Larry Holmes vs. Curtis Shepard, Antonio Tarver vs. Shelby Gross, and other boxers such as Lamar parks, Sergei Artemiev, Joshua Blocus and Leonzer Barber. For more pay-per-view information call (877) 456-7781.

### **Local fights coming up**

Heavyweight prospect Damian "Bolo" Wills (19-0-1, 15 KOs) meets veteran John Clarke (12-7-1) at the Henry Fonda Theater in Hollywood on Thursday June 8. For tickets or more information call (323) 464-0808.

### **Golf tournament with Boxing Greats**

The World Boxing Hall of Fame is having their 5th Annual Golf Tournament of Champions on Saturday June 3 in the Country Club at Soboba Springs. Check in time occurs at 11 a.m. Taking part in the tournament will be a number of former boxing greats like Carlos Palomino, Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini, Danny "Little Red" Lopez, Paul Gonzalez, Mando Muniz and many other boxing greats. The cost is \$150 per player and includes green fees, cart, lunch, beverages,

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dinner and attitude adjustment hour. Or you can just go to the dinner and social hour for \$50 a person. For tickets or more information call (909) 239-3541.

### **Fights on television**

Fri. Telefutera, 9 p.m., Vince Phillips (38-10-1) vs. Jesus Soto Karass (13-3-2)

Fri. Showtime, 11 p.m., Chad Dawson (22-0) vs. Eric Harding (22-3-1)

Sat. Showtime, 9 p.m., Diego Corrales (40-3) vs. Jose Luis Castillo (54-7-1)