

Jose Antonio Rivera Itching For A Fight

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WORCESTER, Mass. (July 6, 2006) – World Boxing Association super welterweight champion Jose Antonio Rivera is dangling his new title belt in front of all the best 154-pounders in the world and challenging any of them to a high profile fight in 2006.

Rivera (38-4-1, 24 KOs) captured the WBA super welterweight title May 6 from Alejandro Garcia (25-1) by unanimous 12-round decision (116-106, 116-106, 114-107). Garcia, who had been floored only once in his career, was dropped five times by Rivera in arguably the leading 2006 Fight of the Year.

“I have accomplished all of my goals I set as a kid,” Rivera said. “I am a three-time world champion in two divisions. I’m setting new goals and that includes unifying the title. That’s why (Oscar) De La Hoya was my first preference. He has something I want, the WBC championship, but he’s said if he fights again, it won’t be until next year.

“Since Oscar said he won’t fight Floyd Mayweather this year, I’m offering Mayweather an opportunity to fight for my world title. He turned down \$8 million to fight (Antonio) Margarito, Winky Wright refused to fight Margarito for \$4 million, so I’m willing to fight Mayweather or Margarito for \$3 million. If neither of those fights happens, I’m open to fighting the winner of (Shane) Mosley-(Fernando) Vargas or (Roman) Karmazin-(Cory) Spinks. I was supposed to fight Vargas a few years ago on HBO, but I hurt my wrist. Don King promotes me, Karmazin and Spinks; that unification fight should be easy to make. I’d even be willing to fight (WBO champ) Sergei Dzindziruk in Germany for both belts as long as the money’s right.”

Rivera is a true working class world champion who is a fulltime court officer in Worcester (MA). As far as anybody knows, he is the only world champion with a fulltime job outside of boxing. Jose certainly is the only three-time world champion boxer working a 9-5 job as well.

“I work a fulltime job for the security and benefits the State of MA offers me,” Jose explained. “It’s hard working fulltime and training for world championship fights, but I have two children now and I’m thinking about their futures, as well as saving money for their college education.

“I’ll continue fighting as long as things go good. I don’t want to fight as long as Bernard (Hopkins). When I was younger I said I didn’t want to fight past 35. I want to start pursuing other parts of my life. I will go to college. I want to major in criminal justice and become a juvenile probation officer.”

Rivera won the IBO welterweight title in 1997 by stopping Gilberto Flores in the second round. Eight years later, Jose defeated previously unbeaten Michel Trabant (38-0) by majority decision for the vacant WBA welterweight championship. Last year, Rivera lost the 147-pound crown by 12-round split decision to Luis Collazo. Jose decided that the strain on his body to lose weight was simply too much for him at 147 and he successfully moved up to 154 and beat Garcia.

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Rivera is the first Worcester world-boxing champion since Lou Brouillard who won the welterweight belt in 1931 and middleweight title two years later.

El Gallo's Hit List

"Pretty Boy" Floyd Mayweather, Jr. (36-0, 24 KOs)

Pound-For-Pound Champion

Opportunity for Mayweather to fight for fifth different world title & extend his legacy

Antonio Margarito (33-4, 24 KOs)

WBO Welterweight Champion

Continues Puerto Rican-Mexican rivalry & another chance for Margarito to fight for 154-crown

"Sugar" Shane Mosley (42-4, 36 KOs)

Former World Champion in three divisions

If he defeats Vargas July 15, Mosley would be in position for fight for yet another title belt

"Ferocious" Fernando Vargas (26-3, 22 KOs)

If he defeats Mosley July 15, unfinished business from 1997 when Rivera's wrist injury cancelled their scheduled HBO bout

Roman "Made In Hell" Karmazin (34-1-1, 21 KOs)

IBF Junior Middleweight Champion

Unification bout if he successfully defends title July 8 vs. Spinks, Karmazin & Rivera both promoted by Don King

Cory "Next Generation" Spinks (34-3, 11 KOs)

Unification bout if he defeats Karmazin July 8, Spinks & Rivera both promoted by Don King

Sergie Dzindziruk (32-0, 21 KOs)

WBO Junior Middleweight Champion

Unification bout, but Rivera would demand much more money to fight in Germany than he got nearly three years ago when he won the WBA welterweight title in Berlin against Trabant