

Moxie and A Guy Named Baldomir

Written by Rick Folstad

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You've got to like the moxie of WBC welterweight champ Carlos Baldomir, a guy about to jump off boxing's version of a cliff.

You've heard the story. The unknown fighter from someplace south of the border – maybe South America – who suddenly shows up and beats the baddest fighter in town, and they call it a fluke, an accident, an aberration.

They think he's just a one-shot artist, an anomaly. But then he pulls off another eye-blinking upset, and now they're not so sure what to think about the guy.

Maybe he is better than his clippings say he is. Maybe he is the next south-of-the-border phenom, the next great welterweight champion, the next reincarnation of Carlos Monzon, only smaller.

But they're not really sure yet if this guy is just that good or if he's just the luckiest SOB in the world.

So the guy decides it's time to show the doubters and the skeptics and the hardcore just what he can do. When they offer him a fight against the baddest fighter on the planet, the lucky SOB from south of the border, who has beaten two guys he had no business beating, grabs that fight quicker than you can say "Baldomir."

So the "lucky" SOB is now dead in the sights of Floyd Mayweather Jr., which is like being in the sights of Hannibal Lecter, only worse. And what does the luckiest SOB do? He spills his drink in Lecter's lap.

On purpose.

"[Mayweather] is faster and more talented than Gatti," said Baldomir, who stopped Gatti this summer after beating Zab Judah in January. "But he doesn't have the heart."

Say again? The best pound-for-pound fighter in the world doesn't have any heart?

It's a very high cliff he'll be jumping off.

Give Baldomir credit for believing in himself, even if the rest of the world still has some doubts.

So why did he take this fight? Why Lecter?

Baldomir made it simple. He said he accepted the fight because it was a way of assuring everyone that he's a great champion.

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“It will be a difficult fight with Mayweather (36-0, 24 KOs) because he is fast and he’s sharp,” Baldomir (43-9-6, 13 KOs) said at a recent press conference in New York City promoting their Nov. 4 fight at Mandalay Bay Resort in Las Vegas (HBO PPV). “But I know with my physical ability and my boxing ability that I will no doubt win.”

Moxie.

And maybe a dash of foolhardiness.

The big name and the bigger reputation of Mayweather don’t appear to leave Baldomir questioning his choice of careers. No outward signs of intimidation. No mumbling. Instead, he takes the other road, the crazier one.

“I feel if I do connect,” Baldomir boldly predicts, “he’s going down.”

That’s considered downright blasphemy in some camps.

But the lucky SOB is not even close to finishing.

“[Judah and Mayweather] are actually the same,” Baldomir said. “But it is easier [to fight] Mayweather because he comes right at you.”

Yeah. Like a king cobra.

Mayweather has his own ideas on how Baldomir got this far.

“I think Gatti got fatigued and Zab overlooked him,” said the baddest fighter on the planet. “He had Zab hurt. A true champion is a great finisher.”

So does Baldomir have a chance?

“He’s either going to go out on his back or on his face,” Mayweather said. “Or maybe he’ll raise that white flag in the air. There are three ways it could go.

According to Baldomir, there might be four.