

Julio Diaz Upset at Brazil's Acelino Freitas Sudden Retirement

Brazil's Acelino "Popo" Freitas, the WBO lightweight titleholder, announced his retirement and gave notice to his promoters that he will not be meeting Coachella's Julio "The Kidd" Diaz in November as scheduled for the IBF and WBO world lightweight titles.

"Acelino called me and told me he wanted to retire from boxing, and that he wanted to make the announcement in his hometown of Salvador, Brazil," stated Art Pellulo, president of Banner Promotions in a press release on Thursday.

Diaz fumed. It was the second time in a year's span that a fight between the two had been canceled. In the first scheduled meeting last January, Diaz nearly boarded the plane to fly to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

"He could have called us before and told me," said Diaz by telephone on Thursday, who knows Freitas personally. "We had all of our people and family getting passports and plane tickets and now we have nothing."

Both Diaz and Freitas, 31, hold world titles and had trained and sparred together on numerous occasions.

"He knew I was going to knock him out," said Diaz, 27, who holds the IBF interim title. "There was no way he was going to beat me."

For a few years Freitas prepared for his big fights, such as his meeting against Cuba's Joel Casamayor in 2002, in the Coachella Boxing Club. Often, Diaz would turn southpaw to give Freitas preparation for his big fights.

"I sparred with Freitas a couple of times," said Diaz. "He could never touch me. They wouldn't let him spar with me anymore because it messed up his confidence."

Diaz said he has options but is upset that most of his plans seem to go awry.

"It always seems to happen. I train, get ready and then something happens and I'm left with nothing," said Diaz who may fight Jesus Chavez in late November if everything goes right.

Freitas (38-1, 32 KOs) had only one loss in his career and that came against hard-hitting Diego Corrales, who is set to fight this weekend against Casamayor for the third time. Popo captured world titles on four occasions including the last against Zahir Rahim last April in a close split-decision win.

"At this point in his career he wants to move on and pursue other interests," Pellulo said.

Boxing Chatter

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Meanwhile Diaz is looking for any opponent.

“I was going to knock him out,” said Diaz of Freitas. “He knew that.”

San Diego fight card Thursday

Former WBO bantamweight titleholder Cruz Carbajal of Mexico meets Trinidad Mendoza at the Golden Hall in San Diego. Carbajal is never in a dull fight and Mendoza is a contender who is looking for a victory against a big name like Carbajal. It should be an explosive bout. The card is promoted by Bobby D Promotions and takes place Thursday Oct. 5. For more information call (619) 420-8866.

Super middleweight tourney

France’s Jean Paul Mendy meets Henry Buchanan at the Chumash Casino on Friday Oct. 6. Both fighters are undefeated and the winner goes on to the final to be held in Las Vegas. Mendy quickly knocked out his first opponent last month. Buchanan also had an easy time in his first fight of the tournament. Also in the semi-finals is Anthony Hanshaw in a 10-round fight against Lafarrell Bunteng. Hanshaw is a former amateur standout who is undefeated and Bunteng has only one loss on his record. The fight card is promoted by Gary Shaw Productions.

Coal Miner’s Daughter

Christy Martin meets Angelica Martinez Friday in Worley, Idaho. Martin hasn’t fought in a year but has decided to seek some world title fights in the next year. “I want some big fights,” says Martin, who is considered one of the best female prizefighters of all time. “I’m not going to be in this game much longer.”

Martinez is an aggressive fighter who scored a draw against Holly Holm in New Mexico. Martin feels it’s a perfect fight.

“She’s aggressive and I’m aggressive,” says Martin.

The fight card will not be televised in California.

World Boxing Hall of Fame

Located in California, the World Boxing Hall of Fame announced that Carlos Baldomir has been named “Fighter of the Year” for 2006 after his incredible victories over Zab Judah and Arturo Gatti. A year ago, if you could have parlayed that Baldomir would beat both, you could have made a million dollars.

It also named the fight last month between WBC junior featherweight titleholder Israel Vazquez and WBO bantamweight titleholder Jhonny Gonzalez that ended with a Vazquez knockout victory as the “Fight of the Year.” Both hit the deck in an electric battle between little guys.

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Both the Fighter of the Year and one of the participants (Vazquez) of the Fight of the Year are promoted by Sycuan Ringside Promotions. They had a big year and it could be even bigger if Baldomir beats Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Vazquez and Gonzalez are expected to attend. Baldomir may attend.

The annual banquet for the World Boxing Hall of Fame is Oct. 14 at the Marriott Hotel at LAX. For more information call (951) 239-3541 or go to www.wbhof.org .

Spadafora is back

Paul Spadafora, who spent some time in jail for an ill-advised temper flare-up, is back in the professional ranks of boxing, according to Michael Acri, who promotes the former lightweight from Pittsburgh.

The tall left-handed boxer formerly held the IBF lightweight title and is undefeated and looking to return as a junior welterweight some time in November.