

## Ortiz/Cordova Do ShoBox

Written by Rick Folstad

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This fight could be like one of those old-time western barroom fistfights where they cleared the saloon floor for room, hid the best booze safely behind the bar, locked the front door and sent the barmaids home early.

Before it was over, the two fighters would break a few windows and maybe bust up the piano. It would be standing room only in the place, everybody wanting to see the fight.

There weren't a lot of rules in that kind of fight, and you didn't need a referee for anything more than an occasional standing eight-count or to make sure everyone heard the bell.

It'd be a back and forth brawl to see who the toughest guy in town was, and when it was over, when one of them couldn't beat the count, the two fighters would shake hands and pat each other on the back. Then someone would buy a round for the house as a kind of celebration.

This could be that kind of fight.

Friday night at the Dodge Arena in Phoenix, two of the best prospects in the welterweight division will square off on "ShoBox: The New Generation" on SHOWTIME.

Puerto Rican fighter "Vicious" Victor Ortiz, now fighting out of Oxnard, Calif., will be facing Marvin "Much-too-Much" Cordova, Jr., out of Pueblo, Colo., in a co-feature headlined by super-bantamweights Juan Manuel Lopez (14-0, 12 KOs) and Cuauhtemoc Vargas (15-1-1, 10 KOs).

The Ortiz - Cordova fight will be one of those crucial matchups where one guy moves a step closer to world contention and the other takes a step backward. Or maybe just a step to the side.

Cordova, the slight underdog, is undefeated with 12 wins and eight knockouts. Born in Rocky Ford, Colo., he's got fast hands and a lot of experience, putting on his first pair of mitts when he was 4, or just old enough to stand up and cock his fists. He was doing five miles of roadwork when he was only 8.

His father has coached him since the beginning and opened his own boxing gym to make everything a little easier for his boy.

With more than 200 amateur fights, Cordova has won 14 national titles.

But this is the pros now and none of that counts. And Cordova knows it.

"I'm truly excited," he said of his fight with Ortiz. "This is my chance to show what I can bring to the table against a world-class opponent (on TV)."

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Cordova calls himself a boxer who can still bang. A natural right-hander, he occasionally switches to southpaw if he thinks it will give him an edge.

While Ortiz is said to be the bigger puncher of the two, Cordova says he has both hand and foot speed on his side.

He credits his left jab for setting everything up, and says he likes to land his left hook to the body and then come up with it to the top.

Ortiz comes into the fight at 16-1 with 11 KOs, his lone loss coming when he was disqualified in the first round of a fight against Corey Alarcon. After knocking Alarcon down in the middle of the first round, Ortiz was disqualified late in the round after knocking Alarcon out with a left uppercut following a clinch. The referee ruled it an illegal punch.

A Top Rank fighter who is considered one of Bob Arum's best young guns, Ortiz is a tough southpaw with some serious bang himself.

Seems a little crazy that one of them is going to take a loss this early in their career. But maybe it won't be so bad for the loser if he can make a good showing against another hot prospect.

Just make sure someone locks the door.