

World championship fights in Lemoore today

Carina Moreno was in Fontana and Moreno Valley for two days to get some sparring for her WBC junior flyweight world title match against Suzannah Warner (7-3) today in Lemoore, California.

Facing a taller straight up fighter like Warner, you need preparation, so who better than current contenders at higher weight divisions such as Kaliesha West and Heather Percival?

Moreno's team hoped to lure world champion Wendy Rodriguez into the ring for a rematch. A fight that took place a year ago ended in victory for the Los Angeles ringmaster after she suffered an accidental head butt that caused a cut over her eye. The fight went to the scorecards and Rodriguez was the winner.

But Rodriguez was not prepared for a rematch and had to decline.

"I just wasn't ready," she said. "I had barely started training again."

Now Moreno (11-1) faces world titleholder Suzannah Warner, who suffered her last loss against West a year ago.

Moreno sparred with Percival and West for several rounds. Though both Percival and West are bigger fighters, they were also sparring for the first time in months and not in real fighting shape.

"Carina is like a machine in the ring," said Larry Ramirez who trains Percival. "She's very quick and accurate. She never stops."

West's first pro bout was against Warner last year at San Manuel Casino. The Moreno Valley boxer knocked Warner down and won a unanimous decision last February. Since then, Warner moved down in weight and captured the NABF junior flyweight title.

"Both Kaleisha and Heather were perfect for what we need," said Rick Noble who trains and manages Moreno. "Carina likes working with fighters like Kaliesha and Heather."

Moreno's busy style makes for good exchanges and her defense is extremely sharp despite her youth. Warner has a good jab and knows how to make changes during a fight. It should be an interesting contest.

Also on the fight card will be Jessica Rakoczy (25-2), the former lightweight titleholder who is meeting Kelli Coffey (13-4-4) for the vacant WBC lightweight world title.

Rakoczy is an excellent fighter but she seldom meets dangerous competition. Coffey is willing

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and Rakoczy is more than willing to meet her. But what about fighting someone like Layla McCarter, Chevelle Hallback or even Eliza Olson who took her title away more than a year ago?

Heavyweights are also featured on the fight card including Goossen Tutor Promotion guys Malik Scott (26-0) and Nigeria's Teke Oruh (12-0-1) in separate bouts. For tickets and information call (866) 472-5223.

Humberto Soto alert

If you like action fighters then don't miss Mexico's Humberto Soto who faces Humberto Toledo (30-2-2) at the Mountaineer Race Track in Chester, West Virginia today. The fight will be televised by Versus.

Soto (40-5-2, 24 KOs) is best remembered for his memorable battle with former Olympian Rocky Juarez in a toe-to-toe battle that took place two years ago. The blows sustained in that fight still ache in my memory.

"When I fought Humberto Soto nobody knew how good he really was," said Juarez. "Now they know it."

Soto keeps fighting elimination bouts and keeps winning. One day the WBC will allow him to actually fight for the world title. If not, there is always the IBF, WBO and WBA to attack.

Both are tall rangy fighters but it's Soto with the overall better resume. Toledo has not lost in six years but hasn't fought good competition. Soto has met several monster opponents and emerged victorious.

But who knows what will happen until they get in the ring?

Also on the same fight card will be Tommy Morrison returning to heavyweight prizefighting after testing negative for HIV. It's been 11 years since he fought and he's now 38. But in the heavyweight division, that's just right.

Another returning heavyweight is Joe Mesi. The tough New York fighter is in his fifth fight since returning from retirement following his injury sustained against Vassiliy Jirov back in 2004. After two years off, Mesi has returned and looks determined to scratch a path to contender status.

New local heavyweight and junior lightweight

Mira Loma's Hildo Silva, a heavyweight, makes his first Southern California professional appearance on Friday at the Doubletree Hotel.

If his last name is familiar, that's because he's trained by his uncle Willy Silva who formerly trained Carlos "El Elegante" Bojorquez.

"He goes right at you," said Chris Arreola, Riverside's heavyweight prospect who has sparred

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several times with Silva. "I love sparring with him because he makes you work. He's not afraid to throw punches."

Last week was Willy Silva's birthday. The Mira Loma boxing trainer also trains Ronald Hurley who won his first pro bout. It was a rematch against Las Vegas boxer Oscar Marin who took the first fight by unanimous decision in January. This time Hurley took the decision by unanimous decision in the four-round junior lightweight bout at the Orleans Casino on Wednesday.

Johnny Tapia

New Mexico's Johnny "Mi Vida Loca" Tapia will be fighting for the last time against Llido Julio at the Isleta Casino in Albuquerque on Friday.

A movie is currently in production depicting Tapia's turbulent life story. A book on the former world champion was released last year and is doing well. It's called *Mi Vida Loca: The Crazy Life of Johnny Tapia*. It's been almost two years since he last fought in the ring.

Tapia, 40, is best remembered for his two epic battles against Paulie Ayala of Texas for the bantamweight world championship. Ayala won both battles but the crowds were enamored with both fighters. He also fought Marco Antonio Barrera for 12 rounds in 2002.

Evander Holyfield to meet Vinny Maddalone

Former heavyweight world champion Evander "The Real Deal" Holyfield has re-signed with promoters Main Events and will meet Vinny Maddalone at the American Bank Center in Corpus Christi on March 17.

Holyfield, 44, fought twice last year winning by knockout against Jeremy Bates and capturing a 12-round unanimous decision against Fres Oquendo.

It's Holyfield's second boxing appearance in Corpus Christi. He fought against Jess Shelby in the southern Texas city in 1984.

"I told several folks when I left there that I would be back," Holyfield stated. "But I didn't expect it to be almost 23 years."