

Boxing Chatter: Is Vic Darchinyan the New Pacquiao?

Written by David A. Avila
Thursday, 01 March 2007 19:00

Everybody is talking at me, but this guy Vic Darchinyan reminds me of someone else.

But who?

While the world awaits one cataclysmic event perhaps another looms as the ribbon buster when the Aussie Armenian Darchinyan faces the skillful Victor Burgos (39-14-3, 23 KOs) of Mexico on Saturday. The fight takes place at the Home Depot Center and is televised by Showtime.

“This kid is the most feared guy in boxing,” said Gary Shaw, who promotes Darchinyan.

It’s a battle between the Victors.

That strength, that speed and that southpaw stance sent electric impulses of recognition firing through my brain when I last saw Darchinyan crack young Filipino challenger Glen Donaire a few months back. Throughout that fight a shadowy image wracked my brain but I still could not remember who the flyweight champion resembled.

It suddenly hit me last week.

He kind of reminds me of Manny Pacquiao.

In fact, Darchinyan claims he’s just like Pacquiao and can fight him too. Just like the Filipino great, Darchinyan appeared out of nowhere and beat someone he was supposed to fall down. Instead he wrested the title from Irene Pacheco and hasn’t looked back in three years.

Time is not on the Armenian boxer’s side. He’s 31. That’s why he’s calling out every fighter above 112 pounds whether it’s Jorge Arce, Pacquiao or perhaps even Oscar De La Hoya. That’s no joke.

“I want the winner of the Rafael Marquez and Israel Vazquez fight,” shouts Darchinyan (27-0, 21 KOs), who’s no shrinking violet. “I’ve sparred with Vazquez before. He can’t hurt me.”

During media workouts the slender Darchinyan mugged for cameras and playfully poked his gloves at bantamweight king Marquez. As if reminding the Mexico City fighter that he wants a piece of him.

For those who think Darchinyan is full of bluster, more than a few people witnessed the flyweight champion slug it out with the vaunted power punching of Edwin Valero in the Maywood Boxing Club more than a year ago.

“Nobody wanted to spar with him so I did,” explains Darchinyan.

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Valero has knocked out every opponent he's ever faced. Only two have lasted more than one round.

"Even Manny Pacquiao is afraid of Edwin Valero," said Darchinyan. "I have never been at 130 pounds but I would love fighting him (Pacquiao)."

Facing Darchinyan is Burgos, a former junior flyweight titleholder with excellent boxing skills and a clever approach to boxing. He's only been knocked out twice and the last stoppage came seven years ago.

"He is going to be worried after the second or third round when he figures out that he is not hurting me with his punches," Burgos, 32, said confidently. "I've been in wars in the ring. He has never been in wars in the ring like I have been with big fighters."

Aside from the anonymous battles in smoke-filled Mexican arenas, Burgos has indeed faced elite fighters in the flyweight levels for the past eight years. Boxers like Will Grigsby, Robert "Mako" Leyva and Rosendo Alvarez are all former world champions with pop.

But Darchinyan poses a different dilemma with his left-handed stance. In fact, the last guy to stop Burgos was ...you guessed it...a left-hander.

"Burgos just said he was training 35 days for this fight. I hope that's enough for him to be ready because I am ready to defeat him," said Darchinyan with hesitation. "He will be slaughtered."

Cotto Defends title on Saturday

Puerto Rico's Miguel Cotto defends his WBA welterweight world title against Germany's Oktay Urkal on Saturday in Puerto Rico. The fight will be televised on HBO.

"I'm concentrating on this fight first," said Cotto unconvincingly when asked about his already scheduled bout for June 2007. "I'm prepared for anything."

Cotto was set to meet Antonio Margarito in June should he beat Urkal, but a last minute change has the Puerto Rican boxer gunning for New York's Zab Judah. That fight will take place at Madison Square Garden on June 9, if he can beat Urkal.

Also on the fight card will be heavy-handed middleweights Edison Miranda and Allan Green.

Miranda has knocked out most of his competition but was beaten for the WBO title by decision last year. He returned to the win column with a first round blow out of Willie Gibbs last December. Now the Colombian knockout artist faces Green from Oklahoma, who also has a knack for sending out opponents on a stretcher. Southern California boxing fans are familiar with Green who fought four times in the area. Green dropped down in weight from light heavyweight to middleweight.

Whoever connects first will probably win.

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Alexis Arguello in Southern California

Nicaragua's former boxing great Alexis Arguello was in Los Angeles to drum support for athletic programs in his native country. The former bantamweight, featherweight and lightweight world champion is now the Vice Mayor of Managua and the Minister of Sports for his country. He stopped at Stevens Steak House in Commerce to speak at a fund raiser.

Arguello is famous for his gut wrenching battles with WBA junior welterweight champion Aaron Pryor during the early 1980s.

Sources say he may run for mayor of Managua at the behest of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega. Yes, that Ortega who headed the Sandinistas who drove Arguello from his country. Now the two are friends.

Ghost sighting

Robert "The Ghost" Guerrero recaptured the IBF featherweight title by stopping Denmark's Spend Abazi with a ninth round technical knockout.

"He can take a shot. I hit him with some deadly shots and he kept getting up," said Guerrero, who knocked down Abazi in the third, fifth and ninth rounds.

Guerrero lost his title to Orlando Salido in November on points. But the Nevada State Athletic Commission found Salido had traces of steroids in his blood system and stripped him of the IBF title. Guerrero was ordered to face Abazi in his homeland and now is a two-time featherweight world champion.

"Line em up," says Guerrero.

Julie Rubalcava is back

Westminster's Julie Rubalcava is now training with David Martinez at La Habra Boxing Club. She returned to the ring after two years without a fight and lost against Monica Lovato in New Mexico in January. It was a rematch. Rubalcava had beaten Lovato in a close fight more than two years ago in Irvine.

"She's going to begin fighting more often," said Martinez, who formerly trained Librado Andrade. "Julie has pretty good skills already. We're going to fine tune her."

Rubalcava, 21, is a bantamweight.