

Boxing Chatter: Wendy Rodriguez, Hollie Dunaway and other matters

Written by David A. Avila

Tuesday, 13 March 2007 19:00

Junior flyweight world champion Wendy Rodriguez travels to St. Charles, Missouri to face hometown favorite Hollie Dunaway (18-4) in a non-title eight round bout on Thursday March 15.

Rodriguez holds the IFBA, IBA and NABA titles and hasn't lost a fight in four years.

WIBA strawweight titleholder Dunaway is also in a streak and hasn't been defeated since losing to Regina Halmich in Germany in 2005, before that, it was two years that saw her last defeat.

"I'm excited about getting a fight again," said Rodriguez (17-2-3), whose last fight was a year ago in a win against Carina Moreno. "After this fight I want another one as soon as possible."

It's more of a hometown fight for Arkansas boxer Dunaway who spoke to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and claimed she's run out of opponents. She may be in for a big surprise against Rodriguez who is one of the best female fighters pound for pound.

More than likely the junior flyweight showdown should be pretty riveting. The small weight division usually features super quick boxers. With Rodriguez and Dunaway you're getting the best of that weight class.

Rodriguez, who fights out of Los Angeles, had sought a fight with former strawweight world champion Vaia Zaganas who stopped Dunaway early in her career. Zaganas retired so now Rodriguez is looking to meet Elena "Baby Doll" Reid or Germany's Regina Halmich.

Halmich is the last fighter to defeat Dunaway. Aside from that loss, Dunaway hasn't lost to anyone else since 2003.

The Dunaway-Rodriguez match takes place at the Ameristar Casino. For tickets and information call (314) 495-0820. The fight card is promoted by Rumble Time Promotions.

Other female fights coming soon

Rhonda Luna (12-0-1) has postponed her retirement and will meet Kelsey Jeffries (36-9-1) for the IFBA featherweight world title at Isleta Casino in Albuquerque, New Mexico on March 22.

Any fight concerning Luna is destined to be a firefight, but when you add Jeffries to the mix that's comparable to tossing gas into a fire.

Also on the same card will be Holly Holm (16-1-2) defending her welterweight world titles against Ann Saccurato (12-1-2). In a junior featherweight bout, Jackie Chavez (9-2) defends her IFBA world title against former world champion Lisa Brown (12-3-3) of Canada. It's a rematch. Brown won their first encounter.

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Kaleisha West is meeting Elizabeth Cervantes in an eight-round bout at the Pechanga Resort and Casino on March 30. The Moreno Valley resident was originally scheduled to face talented Carly Batey but the San Diego resident pulled out due to injury.

West is currently ranked in the top 10 as a bantamweight. In her last bout she defeated former U.S. National Amateur champion Stella Nijoff

Four-time U.S. National Amateur champion Liz Quevedo makes her pro debut against another novice Christy Schawrtz on April 2, at the Irvine Marriott Hotel in Irvine, California.

Some experts predict greatness for Quevedo, but it's not an easy transition from amateurs to professional prizefighting. She trains out of the Commerce Boxing Club where Francisco "Panchito" Bojado learned his craft. For the last 15 years that boxing club has churned out some pretty good amateur fighters.

Heather Percival gets a second crack at Colorado's Teri Cruz (15-4-2), who narrowly defeated her two years ago for the world title. But Cruz does not want the title to be at stake this time.

"I was hoping to fight for the title, but oh well," said Percival (9-4) who trains in Fontana, California. "Maybe next time."

Cruz and Percival will meet at the Sky Ute Casino in Ignacio, Colorado on April 7.

Panama's Caballero defends title

WBA junior featherweight titleholder Celestino Caballero of Panama defends his title against Mexico's Ricardo Castillo. If the name sounds familiar it's because he's the younger brother of Jose Luis Castillo.

Caballero is a big favorite and is the only fighter to defeat Daniel Ponce de Leon. At 5-10 in height, Caballero has the reach, chin and power to make it a rough night for baby brother when they fight at the Seminole Hard Rock in Florida this Friday March 16.

Caballero has knocked out his last two opponents. He stopped Thailand's Somsak Sithchatchawal in the third round to capture the title last October in that fighter's country.

O'Neil Bell in France

Now that charges have been dismissed on O'Neil Bell, the WBC and WBA cruiserweight champion can get down to business and defend his two titles against former champion Jean Marc Mormeck of France.

Bell was accused of threatening a sparring partner with a hatchet while training in Big Bear a few weeks ago. Now he's only concerned with defending the title against the same man he defeated to win them with a 10th round knockout a year ago.

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The fight takes place on Saturday in Levallois Perret, France. It won't be televised in California.

Evander Holyfield looking for third successive win

In a heavyweight contest Evander Holyfield faces Vinny Maddalone in Corpus Christi, Texas on Saturday.

The former cruiserweight and heavyweight world champion Holyfield has captured two victories in succession after inactivity for two years.

Maddalone is a tough and gritty knockout puncher from New York who's getting a chance in a lifetime to bust into the big time if he can defeat the old pro. Holyfield is now 44 and has no plans to quit.

New HBO play-by-play

Bob Papa has been added to the Boxing After Dark show and begins on March 24 when Mikkel Kessler defends his WBC and WBA super middleweight titles against La Habra, California's Librado Andrade. The bout takes place at Copenhagen, Denmark.

Papa was formerly with ESPN and replaces Fran Charles. He joins Max Kellerman and Lennox Lewis on the reporting team.