

Bradley, Salcido Blowing Up

Written by David A. Avila
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Coachella's Joel Diaz feels pretty good these days though his two fighters are both facing dreaded southpaws.

Diaz trains both Timothy "Desert Storm" Bradley and Dominic "DJ" Salcido who both will face rugged competition on Friday April 13 at the Doubletree Hotel in Ontario, California. The fights staged by Thompson Boxing Promotions will not be televised locally.

The former Coachella boxer trains both fighters at his Indio boxing gym and confesses that he might just have the two best prospects this area has seen since his brothers Julio Diaz and Antonio Diaz began their careers.

"Dominic Salcido has faster feet than Julio but both can crack with the left or right," Diaz says. "He has fun in the ring but he takes it seriously."

Bradley, who faces Kenya's Nasser "The Silencer" Athumani (15-3-1, 13 KOs), has risen quickly through the junior welterweight division and is rated number five by the WBC rankings. Now he faces a hard-hitting southpaw and that spells trouble.

"We've been working on Tim's speed. He was fast but now he is even faster because we made him stop lifting weights," Diaz said. "We got Steve Quinonez to come and work with us because he's a southpaw and we got Dominic Salcido to switch to southpaw too."

During the last three years Bradley has performed and graduated from being an amateur standout to a multi-skilled professional prizefighter whose fights are televised nationally. In a sense, this is a homecoming and a parting.

"I'm excited to return to Ontario because it's my backyard," stated Bradley (18-0, 10 KOs). "I am already feeling nostalgia because this could very well be one of the last times my fans will get a chance to see me fight at this venue."

Because Bradley is now ranked in the top five, he's expected to face opponents similarly ranked or world titleholders. Whatever comes first.

Salcido faces Joel Ortega (5-10) who's fought several gifted fighters including Oxnard's Victor Ortiz and Brandon Rios and lost. But there's no counting out a southpaw with power.

"Line them up," says Salcido (10-0, 6 KOs), who was inactive for two years because of injury and managerial problems. "I should have 25 fights already but things happened. I guess things happen for a reason."

Despite living in Rialto, Salcido drives 150 miles to Indio and back every day to train under the guidance of Diaz.

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“That kid never lets up. Nobody works harder than Dominic,” said Diaz who was a title contender when he fought. “Tim (Bradley) and Dominic (Salcido) help each other.”

Now with Bradley poised to fight on the world scene and Salcido expected to fill his shoes as the Inland area’s next star attraction, Diaz realizes his team can move to the elite level.

Both fighters are the new wave of prizefighters from the Inland area that has produced Shane Mosley, Carlos Bojorquez, the Diaz brothers, Chris Arreola and Josesito Lopez.

On Friday, it’s time for Bradley and Salcido to step in the ring.

“They both looked real strong and real sharp,” says Diaz of Salcido and Bradley. “We’re ready for whatever.”

Saturday analysis

Joe Calzaghe’s third round technical knockout victory over Peter Manfredó was anything but a knockout.

After two rounds of careful maneuvering by both fighters in front of a large crowd in Cardiff, Wales, the two finally engaged with Calzaghe dishing out a stream of punches faster than a water hose. But none of the punches were hurting Manfredó and the former Contender participant actually evaded the last 10 punches thrown by the WBO super middleweight champion.

It was a pretty terrible stoppage by the referee who seemed unable to realize that Calzaghe’s blows were pitter-patter and nothing damaging. And the fact that Manfredó evaded the multiple volleys just before the referee stopped the bout made it more unusual.

After the fight most of the HBO crew seemed predetermined on exposing Manfredó as a reality television fighter and not a true contender. They simply excused the bad judgment by the referee and seemed intent on calling the Welsh fighter the much superior fighter.

How could anyone tell?

Not to say Calzaghe doesn’t deserve recognition for his stellar career. But in this case the applause was not deserved.

The only way to remedy this injustice is to call for a rematch.

Manfredó deserves a rematch.

Sure HBO is licking their fingers anticipating Calzaghe against Bernard Hopkins, Jermain Taylor or Winky Wright. But millions of viewers saw that fallacy in judgment and are not convinced of Calzaghe’s abilities.

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Neither am I.

Diego Corrales's plight

Unable to make the 135-pound limit, nor the 140-pound limit, Diego Corrales moved up to the 147-pound welterweight division and was promptly rudely greeted by Joshua Clotney's lefts and rights.

Not that Corrales didn't use every ounce of will and determination to last the entire 10 rounds with the welterweight juggernaut. It just wasn't enough.

Corrales caught Clotney several times with the same left hooks that devastated the lightweight division for years, but the African strongman hardly blinked. Instead, left hooks and uppercuts snapped Corrales head so many times it looked as if it were on a swivel.

Now comes the big decision: should Corrales move down to junior welterweight or call it quits?

"I felt fine. It was a tough fight," said Corrales to Showtime interviewer. "I'm going to keep on pushing on."

Fights on television

Wed. ESPN2, 7 p.m., Raymond Joval (35-4) vs. Willie Gibbs (20-2).

Fri. ESPN2, 6 p.m., Zab Judah (34-4) vs. Ruben Galvan (27-11-2).

Fri. Telefutera, 8 p.m., Brandon Rios (14-0) vs. Carlos Madrid (8-2-1).

Sat. pay-per-view, 6 p.m., Manny Pacquiao (43-3-2) vs. Jorge Solis (32-0-2); Jorge Arce (46-3-1) vs. Cristian Mijares (30-3-2); Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. (30-0-1) vs. Anthony Shuler (20-4-1).