

Boxing Chatter: Molina, Smith and other boxing bits

Written by David A. Avila
Thursday, 26 April 2007 19:00

Hot lightweight prospect John Molina in Southern California signed a contract with Ben Lira to make it official.

Lira, one of the more esteemed trainers in California who developed former world champion Lupe Aquino among many others, is now officially the trainer and co-manager of Molina.

Tall at 5-feet, 11 inches, for a lightweight, Molina was burned a path through lightweights since fighting as a professional. With only a few amateur fights, Lira decided that his charge was ready to dive into the pro pool and he's been correct.

Molina, 24, has stopped five of six opponents. Only Julio Chavez fought and lost by decision to the speedy hard-punching California fighter.

"I used to go in and throw a lot of punches and it would be over," says Molina, whose father John Molina Sr. is officially a co-manager too. "But once I started sparring with guys like Antonio Margarito, Mike Anchondo and Jesus Karass-Soto I learned that doesn't work with those guys. That's when I began listening more to Ben."

His last fight was on the Top Rank Promotions under card of the Jorge Arce-Julio Ler match at the Honda Center in Anaheim. Molina knocked out Rudy Paz of Texas in the first round.

Lira says his fighter has a lot more to learn in the world of boxing but already has the basic tools needed to win fights.

"John has knockout power and speed and that's a big equalizer," Lira says. "Once he learns all of the other skills such as blocking and setting up his punches he will be a force."

Lira and father and son Molinas signed a formal contract in front of California State Athletic Commission representatives on Wednesday April 25, 2007.

"Now we're official," Lira said.

Terry Smith in California

Heavyweight contender Terry Smith fights Kelvin "Concrete" Davis (24-5-2) at the Million Dollar Elm Casino in Tulsa, Oklahoma on May 11.

Currently the granite-chinned heavyweight has been sparring with Riverside, California's Chris "The Nightmare" Arreola who is scheduled to fight former U.S. Olympian Devin Vargas on May 4 in Las Vegas.

The Little Rock Arkansas native has only two losses and those were decisions to Jameel

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McCline and Calvin Brock.

“I’ll fight any heavyweight that wants to fight me just give me ample time to prepare,” said Smith (29-2-1, 18 KOs) who took the McCline fight on short notice. “If it’s a big fight I need time to develop a game plan.”

Smith usually travels to California to work with James Toney and Javier Mora. It was through Mora that he discovered Arreola needed someone to work with too.

“It was perfect for me and him,” said Arreola. “He’s a great fighter who knows his way around the ring.”

Smith’s opponent Davis is a former cruiserweight world champion who now fights at heavyweight.

Morongo Casino fight card

Ecuador’s Fernando Zuniga (25-8) meets Ernesto Zamora (14-10) in an action-packed fight card promoted by Two Feathers Promotions at the Morongo Casino on Friday April 27.

Zuniga has fought world champions such as William Joppy and Charles Brewer and has also fought number one contender Sam Soliman of Australia.

Other fighters featured will be featherweight sensation Dominic Coca a hard-hitting no-nonsense slugger from Compton and bantamweight Michael Franco, a local favorite who will be fighting in a six-round contest against Luis Raul Galvan.

Eight bouts are planned for the night. The doors open at 6 p.m. and the first bout begins at 7:30 p.m. For tickets or information call (866) 328-2024.

Layla McCarter non-title fight in Las Vegas

GBU and WBA lightweight champion Layla McCarter will be fighting former featherweight champion Melissa Hernandez once again at the Orleans Casino on Friday April 21.

McCarter was scheduled to defend her titles against Melissa Del Valle, who owns a win over her. A training injury suffered by Del Valle forced the cancellation.

Hernandez quit in her corner during their previous encounter last February but wanted the rematch with McCarter.

“She’s just a gutsy girl,” said McCarter, who is considered one of the best female fighters in the world. “Maybe she has a different plan of attack. We’ll see.”

James Toney fight on May 24

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Future Hall of Fame heavyweight James "Lights Out" Toney (69-6-3, 43 KOs) will be meeting Danny Batchelder (25-4-1, 12 KOs) at the HP Pavilion in San Jose, California on May 24, 2007.

Joan Guzman to fight for WBO lightweight title

Unable to attract challengers for his WBO junior lightweight title, Joan Guzman (27-0, 17 KOs) has jumped up another weight division to challenge WBO lightweight titleholder Michael "Rocky" Katsidis (22-0, 20 KOs). The fight takes place on May 26 at the Anaheim Convention Center.

"Nobody wants to face me they're all afraid," said Guzman, who is a former junior featherweight champion too. "I appreciate that Michael Katsidis accepts the challenger."

Katsidis, a knockout puncher from Toowoomba, Australia, recently captured the title with a fifth round knockout of Graham Earl in London in February.

"This is a dream come true for me to fight in the states," Katsidis said.

Fight results

Abner Mares of Montebello knocked out Angel Priolo with a right hand in the sixth round in Chicago. The fast-rising bantamweight is now trained by Nacho Beristain who tutors world champions Juan Manuel and Rafael Marquez.

Middleweight challenger Miguel Espino captured a 10-round decision against Russia's Sergey Stepkin at Salinas, California last Saturday.

Kendall Holt took an easy 12-round decision against Mighty Mike Arnaoutis at Atlantic City last Friday. Holt dropped Arnaoutis with a right hand in the final round, but the former Greek Olympian survived until the end. Holt will now fight for the junior welterweight title.

Francisco Santana

Welterweight prospect Francisco Santana (5-0) is now trained by Wayne McCullough. The Las Vegas fighter has just been added to the May 4, fight card at the Palm Casino. Also on that same card will be Riverside's Chris "The Nightmare" Arreola and Pittsburgh's Eddie Chambers.

McCullough also trained super middleweight contender Librado Andrade and middleweight contender Enrique Ornelas.

Santana is originally from San Jose but now lives in Las Vegas.