

“Gallito” Returns, Aims To Rule Roost

Written by Ralph Gonzalez
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Former WBA super-flyweight champion Martin “Gallito” Castillo (30-2, 16 KO’s) couldn’t help but feel disappointed as he watched Jorge Arce get schooled by WBC champion Christian Mijares on April 14th. Castillo was scheduled to be “Travieso” Arce’s next opponent should the popular Sinaloan survive the slick Tijuana boxer. Castillo, along with many others, felt that he would be the one to expose the charismatic little brawler.

Unfortunately for Castillo, aka “Little Rooster,” Arce drowned in the sea of Mijares as he was befuddled and easily outmaneuvered in a unanimous decision loss that taxed much of Arce’s luster.

“I was disappointed in the out-come of course. Arce is a big name and I really wanted that fight,” said Castillo from his home in Los Angeles which he shares with wife Patty and their two children. “Mijares proved himself worthy of the title and that he’s a talented champion. I’m sure I’ll see him in the ring in the future.”

Castillo’s last fight was more than ten months ago when he lost via cuts to Japan’s Nobuo Nashiro in a tight battle. He’s finally getting back to the business of boxing on Saturday, May 12th in Tijuana against journeyman Jorge Romero in an attempt to shake off some ring rust.

“I’ve been very anxious to get in the ring and in front of a crowd. It’s been the longest period of inactivity in my career,” said the 30-year-old Castillo.

He’s hoping to get a crack at one of the two current champions, WBC belt holder Christian Mijares and WBA champion Alexander Munoz. He’s most familiar with the Venezuelan, Munoz, who faced Castillo twice in championship bids which the Mexico City native won. Ironically, Munoz just took the title from Nashiro via unanimous decision on May 3. Now the word is that Munoz wants the proverbial thorn taken out by facing off against Castillo for a third time. “I’ve heard he wants to do it again. I’d accept that fight. I’m a fighter. I know what it’s like to have a loss weigh on your shoulders. As fighters we always want to avenge our defeats.”

Manager Frank Espinoza makes the final call for Castillo’s engagements and stated he would gladly accept a fight against Munoz.

“I would be happy to put Martin in the ring against Alexander Munoz. First things first. Let’s get this fight coming up out of the way. We want to make sure his cuts healed properly. Then we can talk about people like Mijares and Munoz,” said Espinoza.

The ugly cuts Espinoza is referring to happened against Nashiro when a punch he landed cut Castillo during the second round. The small cuts over his eyes got progressively worse as the fight wore on. At one point, the well respected cut man Miguel Diaz referred to the lesions which fused to form one long slice, as looking like a third eye. It was in the tenth round when Castillo was turning the tide, that the fight was stopped and the TKO loss awarded to Nashiro.

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“He won fair and square. I won’t take anything away from him but the cuts made executing my fight plan extremely difficult,” remembers Castillo.

Castillo had surgery which included the removal of scar tissue as well as shaving down his brow which protruded and made him prone to lacerations. He kept himself in shape by doing some light training while he healed in anticipation of his next fight. Several dates fell through, which bothered Castillo. “Training and cutting weight and having a fight cancelled is very tough on a fighter so I was feeling antsy. It looks like now were heading in the right direction,” said Castillo enthusiastically.

Top Rank Promotions matchmaker Bruce Trampler came through and locked in Saturday’s date at the racetrack in Tijuana. “The ring is where I feel at home,” said Castillo. “It’s where the hard training pays off. I’m confident the title will be mine again. It’s just a matter of time.”

Castillo vs. Munoz part III would be another crowd pleaser as were both prior meetings. Both men have something to prove. Castillo vs. Mijares? Now we’re talking about a boxing fan’s dream since both of these men are considered two of the best boxer-punchers in the world. “I’m hungrier than ever,” said Castillo. “Munoz has my title. I want it back and then I want Mijares.”

Castillo vs. Romero will be promoted by Top Rank in association with Zanfer promotions. TV Azteca is set to televise.