Written by David A. Avila
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Top Rank's Bob Arum said Oscar De La Hoya's mega fight with Floyd Mayweather was good for the sport and seeks to speak with Golden Boy Promotions about possible match ups in the very near future.

"It put the focus back on boxing," said Arum by telephone on Thursday afternoon about the fight that drew 2.1 million pay per views. "By and large it helped boxing."

Currently focused on the Saturday middleweight showdown between Top Rank's Kelly "The Ghost" Pavlik and Edison "The Black Panther" Miranda, he sees his protégé as possibly next Golden Boy.

"I've always felt this about him," said Arum of Pavlik, who is undefeated and faces his most critical test against the Colombian bomber. "My feeling is he's two fights away from being the biggest attraction in boxing."

Of course there are two men named Miranda and Taylor who stand in is way of breaking through the barrier separating stardom from super stardom. Pavlik has to beat a super star to be a super star but it's two steps away.

"It's exciting to be in this position," Pavlik said.

Though Pavlik, to his credit, refuses to address the fact he is an Anglo fighter. The Youngstown, Ohioan has proven to be quite skilled and determined to become not only the middleweight champion of the world, but a prizefighter willing to face whoever is placed in front of him.

"You could see even when he was an amateur he was something special," Arum said.

Arum also said that he'd like to speak with Golden Boy Promotions about a possible match up between Marco Antonio Barrera and Manny Pacquiao in the near future.

"We know Barrera has about three months left in his contract," said Arum, adding that Top Rank would be willing to negotiate a fight between the two Pound for Pound fighters. Others mentioned as possible foes for the Filipino super star are Edwin Valero, Joan Guzman and Humberto Soto should he defeat Manny's younger brother Bobby Pacquiao on June 9 in New York City.

Speaking of June 9, another fight with enormous implications takes place between Miguel Cotto and Zab Judah at Madison Square Garden. It's a match that could go any direction. In July is Antonio Margarito's match against Paul Williams. Both fights are toss-ups.

"Both are tough fights," Arum said. "Both could go either way."

Percival fights Valentini this Friday

Fontana's Heather Percival meets Rita Valentini of Hollywood at the Quiet Cannon on Friday May 18, in a bantamweight bout scheduled for six rounds.

Percival (9-4) is a highly-ranked bantamweight and plans to fight junior bantamweight titleholder Teri Cruz in a nontitle bout in July. She recently traveled to Germany and lost a close decision to world champion Alesia Graf in Dusseldorf last November.

Valentini (6-4) was a former featherweight who dropped down in weight under trainer Freddie Roach. She trains at the Wild Card Boxing club but has been slightly inactive for the last two years but trains daily.

State welterweight champion Aaron Martinez (7-0) meets the always-dangerous Juan Pablo Montes de Oca. It's not an easy fight for Martinez. De Oca has improved drastically under the guidance of Robert Diaz.

Another six-round event features lightning quick Cleotis Pendarvis in a welterweight contest against Christopher Fernandez of Salt Lake City.

Others on the same fight card include Colton's Freddie Barrera facing Francisco Zepeda and Riverside's Hector Serrano against East L.A.'s Cesar Garcia making his pro debut. Garcia is my real estate agent who also doubles as an MMA writer for Combat News. He's a jack-of-all-trades.

For tickets or information call (323) 816-6200.

Arkansas Heavyweight beats ex-champ

Terry Smith, who was working out in Riverside the last month, captured a 10-round unanimous decision over former cruiserweight world titleholder Kelvin "Koncrete" Davis (24-6-2, 17 KOs) in Oklahoma last week.

Smith (30-2-1, 18 KOs) and Riverside's Chris "The Nightmare" Arreola sparred against each other to help prepare for their bouts. Arreola stopped Malcom Tann more than a week ago in Las Vegas.

Smith is from Arkansas and was scheduled to fight this Saturday in Memphis. No word yet on whether his bout is still on the card. It will not be televised.

Castillo KO's Romero in Tijuana

Mexico's Martin Castillo, the former junior bantamweight titleholder, stopped Jorge Romero in the fifth round at Tijuana, Mexico on Saturday.

It was Castillo's first fight since losing by technical knockout due to a severe cut on his face

against former WBA titleholder Nabuo Nashiro, who was beaten by Alexander Munoz last week.

Castillo wants a title shot against Munoz whom he's beaten twice or new WBC titleholder Cristian Mijares.

Colombia's Perez at Doubletree Hotel

Colombia's undefeated Yhonny Perez faces Samuel Lopez in the main event at the Ontario Doubletree Hotel on May 25 in a fight card by Thompson Boxing Promotions.

Perez has been facing stiffer competition lately. Lopez is a tough veteran with loads of experience.

Also on the card will be Rialto's Dominic Salcido. No opponent has been named on the Thompson Promotions fight card. For tickets or information call (714) 935-0900.

Evander Holyfield update

The Real Deal says his weight's at 210 and he's ready to face Lou Savarese on June 30 in good old El Paso, Texas. The fight will be available on pay-per-view television.

It's Holyfield's fourth consecutive fight in the Lone Star state after last fighting in 1986.

The fight card is promoted by Main Events and tickets go on sale on Saturday May 19 for the event scheduled for the Don Haskins Center. For information (915) 747-5234.

Chevelle Hallback vs. Hollie Holm

One of the most feared fighters in women's boxing will test welterweight champion Holly Holm in her home turf on Wednesday May 23 in Albuquerque, New Mexico at the Tingley Coliseum.

Hallback, a junior lightweight world champion, agreed to the fight for lack of opponents.

"Nobody wants to fight me so I'll fight Holly Holm," said Hallback.