

## Advice To Pac-Man: Beware “La Zorrita”

Written by Ralph Gonzalez  
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Humberto “Zorrita” Soto was raised in a cardboard dwelling in Los Mochis, Sinaloa.

He now sits amidst the luxury of the Affinia Hotel in Manhattan.

Days before his big fight at Madison Square Garden in New York against Bobby Pacquiao (27-12-3, 12KO), he marvels at the Big Apple to TSS. “It’s an amazing city,” said Soto. “It’s a whole other world away from Los Mochis.”

Soto (41-5-2, 25 KOs) is the WBC #3 ranked super featherweight and also one of the most avoided fighters in the game. According to Soto, the top fighters in the 126 and 130 pound divisions who saw the Sinaloense break out with a stellar, unanimous decision win over highly regarded Rocky Juarez want nothing to do with him.

“They’re definitely avoiding me. I think I’ve looked tremendous in my last few outings and other fighters don’t want any part of me,” said Soto. “It’s a high risk, low reward situation to fight me.”

Soto has remained the mandatory contender to champion Juan Manuel Marquez for ten months as his Las Vegas based promotional company, Top Rank, continues its back and forth political grudge match with L.A. based Golden Boy Promotions. Oscar De La Hoya’s company promotes Soto’s potential opponents like Marco Antonio Barrera and the aforementioned Juan Manuel Marquez. “I’m caught in the middle between the two companies. I wish they could find a way to work together,” said Soto.

Juan Manuel Marquez chose to face stablemate Marco Antonio Barrera instead of Soto, who was appointed as a mandatory defense by the WBC. With some slick political maneuvering, Marquez somehow avoided Soto, who’s clearly bothered by the twists of fate.

“I’m focused on Bobby Pacquiao right now but the fight I want is against Marquez. That’s who I’m supposed to be fighting,” said Soto. Although there are no plans set in stone, it’s rumored that Marquez will most likely face someone not named Soto again. “I want the WBC to enforce my mandatory status like they’re supposed to. I hope they don’t let Marquez get away from me again,” said Soto.

You can’t blame them for running.

Soto looked devastating in his defeat of Humberto Toledo who was 32 and 2 at the time. “I was told I looked like an assassin against Toledo. Being properly prepared is what gave me the confidence and inner strength to win,” said Soto. The knockout victory in three rounds last February gave fans a taste of Soto’s insatiable desire to win. His prior wins against Ivan Valle (KO4) and Oscar Leon (KO9) were also impressively destructive.

.Now, Manny Pacquiao’s brother, Bobby, gets to feel his wrath. Bobby’s not bad but he’s no

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Manny. “It doesn’t matter who he’s related to. Inside the ring it’s just me and him. The winner will be the one that’s better trained and in the best condition. Conditioning will make all the difference. I consider him a dangerous guy. I treat all my opponents as dangerous,” said Soto. “I can tell you one thing. I’m prepared for anything he’s got.”

The 27 year old readied himself in the boxing rich town of Tijuana under the watchful eye of his manager Antonio Lozada and trainer Pancho Valenzuela. “La Zorrita” claims to train with dedication and hunger driven by a deep seeded desire to excel. “I always want more and more. I’m not the type of person that gets complacent,” said Soto. “I’ve always had the mind of a winner. I’m also motivated because I know I have to take care of my mother and two sons.”

The nickname Zorrita, which translates into “Little Fox”, was given to him by his grandmother due to his cleverness and mischievous ways as a child. “I was always trying to come up with some kind of scheme and asking a lot of questions. My grandmother said I reminded her of a little fox,” he says.

In his native town of Los Mochis he’s seen as a hometown hero. “The support I’ve had in Los Mochis is tremendous. I’ve had two songs (corridos) written about me and I’m touched to be honored that way,” said Soto. “It only makes me work harder in the gym. It makes me want to make my fans and the state of Sinaloa proud every time I fight.”

If you see a similarity in style to future hall of famer Erik “El Terrible” Morales it may have to do with the fact that Soto was Morales’ sparring partner for “El Terrible’s” fight against In Jin Chi. “I learned some things from being in that camp,” remembers Soto. “It definitely played a role in my development.”

Like Morales, Soto uses his reach and height effectively. Like Morales, he’s also a firm believer of giving back with interest. “If my opponent punches me once then I have to punch back three or four times,” said Soto. “I need that instant feeling of revenge.”

Soto promises not to disappoint on Saturday. “I’m super hungry and thirsting to win,” he assures. “It comes from having a humble upbringing. I’ve been literally hungry for food in my life. Those hardships are what inspired me to become someone who’s not willing to settle for less,” said Soto. “Marquez, Pacquiao and all the others can try to avoid me all they want. Eventually they’re going to have to face me. And when they do I can guarantee them the hardest fight of their lives.”

Check out Humberto “La Zorrita” Soto vs. Bobby Pacquiao on the under card of Miguel Cotto vs. Zab Judah this Saturday on HBO Pay Per View from New York City. Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. vs. Grover Wiley is also part of the event.