

Undbeaten Mexican To Test Tim Bradley

Written by David A. Avila
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Deep in the desert with temperatures soaring well past 115 degrees Timothy "Desert Storm" Bradley (20-0, 11 KOs) prepares for yet another undefeated fighter when he faces Mexico's Miguel Vazquez.

His trainer Joel Diaz, a former pro fighter too, feels his student is ready for any junior welterweight in the world including IBF titleholder Paulie Malignaggi and WBC titleholder Junior Witter.

"Tim is mentally ready to fight the junior welterweight champions of the world," said Diaz, whose brother Julio holds the IBF lightweight title. "He's just waiting."

On Friday July 27, Bradley faces Vazquez (19-0, 9 KOs) in a battle of undefeated junior welterweights at Omega International Products in Corona. Bradley is ranked number three by the WBC and Vazquez is unranked.

"We know he likes to come forward and he's always on his opponent," said Diaz.

Vazquez comes from Guadalajara, Mexico and is making his first appearance on U.S. soil. All of his previous 19 pro fights have been in Mexico City and Guadalajara. He's beaten six undefeated fighters.

"It's not an easy fight. Nineteen and 0 is 19 and 0," said Diaz. "He's never lost."

For Bradley the main detriment is finding sparring partners who can stay in the ring with him.

"It's getting to be a bigger problem," Diaz says. "We're going to have to go out to find sparring."

Aside from his stable mate Dominic Salcido, a lightning quick lightweight, Bradley's team had to scour Southern California and came across a welterweight named Aaron Martinez who holds the California state welterweight title.

"Aaron is a real strong kid who was perfect (sparring) for Timothy," said Diaz.

This could be the last time boxing fans in Riverside and San Bernardino County get an opportunity to see Bradley before he moves on to the bigger venues in Las Vegas and New York.

"We're just waiting for the call," says Diaz. "Tim is ready for anybody even Malignaggi."

Diaz says that Bradley watches boxing religiously and studies as many junior welterweights as possible.

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“He knows everything about the other guys in his weight class. He spends all night watching tapes of the fighters,” said Diaz. “Nobody is hungrier to make it than Tim.”

Junior welterweights stars on Bradley’s list:

Demetrius Hopkins fought last Saturday and knocked out Colombia’s Jailer Berrio at 2:57 in the second round. It was left hooks that dropped Berrio twice in the second round. Hopkins is the cousin of light heavyweight world champion Bernard Hopkins.

IBF titleholder Malignaggi, who recently captured the title with a convincing victory over Lovemore N’Dou, is a target for the Indio prizefighter. The speedy New Yorker could equal Bradley’s speed, but can he match his power?

Vivian Harris recently won the right to face WBC junior welterweight titleholder Junior Witter when he edged Southern California’s Juan Lazcano last February. Bradley could face whoever emerges as the winner from a fight expected to occur on Sept. 7, in England.

Victor Ortiz fights out of Oxnard, but like Bradley, is relatively unknown outside of the West Coast where he’s decimated opponents. A match between Bradley and Ortiz would be a sell out in California or Las Vegas in about five years. Both need to build up their fan base before tackling each other.

Carlos Baldomir back in title hunt

Argentina’s Carlos Baldomir, who formerly held the welterweight world title, is meeting former welterweight champion Vernon Forrest for the vacant WBC junior middleweight title on Saturday at the Emerald Casino.

Floyd Mayweather Jr. captured the title from Oscar De La Hoya last May 5, but decided to vacate the title and fight as a welterweight.

The title fight will be aired on HBO.

“I’m moving up in weight for this fight,” said Baldomir when he was last in Southern California. “I was a welterweight for a long time and it was difficult making the weight.”

Forrest has been fighting at junior middleweight since 2005 but only has three fights in that time. He edged out Ike Quartey last summer and has battled arm injuries for three years.

The Georgia boxer who beat Shane Mosley twice has a big height and reach advantage over the much shorter Baldomir. All Forrest needs is a good stiff left jab to win this fight. But will his left hand be healthy?

Baldomir is a rough and tough brawler who knows how to fight inside and has a granite chin. He beat speedy Zab Judah and knocked out Arturo Gatti who were close to his own size. In this fight he gives up five inches in height.

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“I expect a good fight,” said Baldomir.

Fights on television

Fri. ESPN2, 6 p.m., Andre Berto (18-0, 16 KOs) vs. Cosme Rivera (30-10-2, 21 KOs).

Fri. Telefutura, 8 p.m., Martin Castillo (31-2, 17 KOs) vs. Oscar Andrade (36-27-1, 18 KOs).

Sat. HBO, 10:15 p.m., Carlos Baldomir (43-10-6) vs. Vernon Forrest (38-2, 28 KOs); replay of Bernard Hopkins vs. Winky Wright fight.