

## Campas/Bravo: 99 and Counting

Written by Phil Woolever

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PASCUA YAQUI NATION – Luis Ramon “Yori Boy” Campas becomes one of the few major fighters to reach a conking centennial, with his one hundredth pro bout when he meets “The Contender” alumni Norberto “Nito” Bravo in a ten round tilt Friday night at AVA Amphitheater, bordering Tucson.

Campas /Bravo is the closest thing to a big hometown showdown these parts have seen in many a desert moon.

In a season of unusually heavy monsoons and lightning storms that moon has glowed beautifully, eclipse and all. Hopefully the duke-out will live up to the potential that AVA’s outdoor arena offers for a splendid, toe to toe evening between seasoned veterans.

“Yori Boy is well known everywhere,” said Bravo, “What can I say? I respect the guy and I’ve seen him fight. I was a fan of his but now I have to fight him so I trained my butt off to be here and get the victory. I take my hat off to him; he’s an outstanding fighter, one of my favorites. But I’m here and I’m ready to win.”

“I’m glad to face a willing fighter like Bravo,” said Campas, “I know he has a good reputation and he’s been around. I wish him good luck. I too prepared very well and I know what I have to do is work harder. I know it will be a tough fight. I just want the fans to get a good show.”

Hard luck local hero Bravo, 24-13-3 (13), has a large loyal following, but hasn’t been able to capitalize on the popularity he gained as a season two “Contender” contestant. Getting blasted out by Andre Berto as a replacement on HBO in February didn’t help, but besides guts and heart, Bravo has plenty of resiliency.

He’ll need it against Campas, 89-10 (72), who’s looked surprisingly solid lately, most recently winning a 10 round nod against Billy Lyell in June.

Campas, who relocated to nearby Phoenix, fought here in October 2004. At that time it looked like anybody with a conscience would consider potential neurological damage as a sluggish Campas racked up the mileage and the lumps in a southwest barnstorming run.

Campas’s career got a revitalization boost after a gritty stand against John Duddy, who may not have proved as much as it looked. That said, it seems Campas probably still has enough to maul his way ahead of Bravo, unless Bravo brings his “A” game, a big question lately.

If Bravo boxes as consistently aggressive as he did against Demetrius Hopkins in a fight many felt Bravo deserved to win, it’s Bravo’s fight to lose.

Bravo’s last fight was a confidence boosting 3rd round TKO of Jaime Barahona at AVA in June, before a swarm of supporters.

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“It’s important for me to get my mentality back to where it should be,” said Bravo, “I’ve had a rough career, I’ve had some bad calls. I’ve never been the type of fighter to just pick and choose opponents. I’ve never gone around anybody. I want to show the people in boxing that I have what it takes to be in there with world champions. I’ve been pressing on and trying to make it to that level.”

“This is Campas’s twentieth year as a pro,” said manager Joe Diaz, “he didn’t expect to be in the game this long, but he’s got a family to feed. I don’t want to go into it now, but he’s been cheated a lot along the way. He started fighting when he was fifteen and didn’t have anyone looking out for him.”

Casino officials announced that over four thousand tickets had already been sold.

At 36 each, both Campas and Bravo seem like very decent guys facing their fistic sunset. It’s a crossroads fight off the main drag, to make headway up a clogged stream to financial rewards.

The moon will only shine for one. Count on an emotional engagement.