

Arum Returns Gold Medal to Golden Boy

Written by David A. Avila
Monday, 01 October 2007 19:00

EAST LOS ANGELES-Inside the same hospital where his mom died many years ago, Oscar De La Hoya was given back the Olympic gold medal on Monday he won in 1992, the same award that boosted him from an impoverished youngster from East L.A. to the multi-millionaire success story.

“It started all my dreams,” said De La Hoya. “It made me the person I am today.”

De La Hoya and Top Rank promoter Bob Arum met inside the Cecilia De La Hoya Cancer Center named for his mother who died in the East Los Angeles hospital in 1991 from cancer. The emotional ceremony saw Arum return the medal after holding it for 11 years.

The sparkling gold medal that De La Hoya promised to win for his mother was returned to its owner.

Back in 1996 an excited De La Hoya gave the Olympic symbol of achievement to Arum during his 65th birthday as a gesture of gratitude. Perhaps realizing the magnitude, the promoter told his premier prizefighter that in the future he would return the medal.

“I was really taken aback. I was appreciative it was a wonderful gesture,” recounted Arum. “But I said in front of everybody that I didn’t win this medal, he won this medal and that when he retired I would return it to him.”

Later, De La Hoya left Top Rank to join another promotion company but discovered it was lacking. He returned to his former company where an overjoyed Arum not only forgave him, but helped the East Los Angeles boxer form his own company called Golden Boy Promotions.

For a short while Top Rank and the fledgling Golden Boy Promotions combined forces for a number of cards. Then Marco Antonio Barrera was signed by De La Hoya’s company and a third fight with Tijuana’s Erik Morales was inked.

That turned out to be the final cooperative fight card between the two companies.

Following Morales loss to Barrera in 2004, tempers erupted over Top Rank’s banner being displaced and mocking words by the winner of the fight left Arum angry.

Other boxers and representative from both companies made slightly derogatory comments too that only inflamed the situation and made the split even wider.

A year ago Golden Boy approached Manny Pacquiao who’s services had ended with his previous promoter and thought it signed him to a contract. Then Top Rank revealed it had signed him too, citing, that Golden Boy Promotions had illegally interfered.

Arum Returns Gold Medal to Golden Boy

Written by David A. Avila

Monday, 01 October 2007 19:00

Both sides tossed lawsuits at each other like confetti.

Meanwhile the sport of boxing was suffering as both promotion companies had fighters that could make more money fighting each other than avoiding one another.

Arum, who's been in the boxing business since the 1960s, realized that the war with Golden Boy was bad for business. Richard Schaefer, CEO for Golden Boy, agreed and both parties dropped lawsuits against each other and met on the poolside of the Beverly Hills Hotel this past summer.

The fruit of their alliance was to be a star-studded fight card on Sept. 15 with Juan Manuel Marquez defending his WBC junior lightweight title against Rocky Juarez in the main event. But an injury to Marquez forced a postponement of that fight to November.

Now the two companies are putting their best foot forward as Barrera fights Pacquiao in the rematch of their 2003 fight.

"Now we can put on some incredible events beginning this week with Manny Pacquiao and Marco Antonio Barrera," said Arum, citing this week's fight card that pits fighters of both companies against each other at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in Las Vegas on Saturday.

During the middle of the ceremony a video of De La Hoya's triumphant win in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics was shown.

"I get chills talking about it and thinking about it," said De La Hoya of the returned gold medal. "This is a part of my heart, now its complete, and now I'm going to give part of my heart back to the hospital."

Dr. Miguel Martinez, who met De La Hoya and his family when his mother was ill, recalled seeing the fighter, then 19, return triumphantly with medal in tow.

"I invited him to a gala to show off his medal," said Martinez, who is the chief doctor for the Dept. of Oncology at White Memorial Hospital. "I went to pick him up and he kept saying we had to wait for his father. I told him it was ok that his father knew. Then he told me he didn't know how to make a tie (knot). That's the Oscar I remember. Look at him now and what he's accomplished. It's really a success story for East Los Angeles."

Boxing Chatter

Arum on Pavlik and other fights

"He really showed he had a lot of heart," said Arum of his newest champion Kelly Pavlik, who knocked out Jermain Taylor to win the middleweight world championship last Saturday. "When he got knocked down I almost died."

Arum Returns Gold Medal to Golden Boy

Written by David A. Avila

Monday, 01 October 2007 19:00

Arum said he asked his matchmaker Bruce Trampler if the fight was over.

“He told me ‘hell no, just watch this kid,’” Arum recalled. “Did he ever come back and not only win, he left no doubt who is the next middleweight champion.”

The head of Top Rank said he was shocked by the scores of the three judges.

“I was appalled,” said Arum. “Thankfully Kelly didn’t let it go that route. He settled in in the ring where it should be decided.”

Arum said that should Alfonso Gomez beat Ben Tackie, the former Contender star will fight Mexico’s Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. on March 29. Also on the card will be Martin Castillo tackling Jorge Arce in a junior bantamweight contest between Mexican former champions.

Shobox in Corona, Calif.

Yonhhy Perez (13-0, 10 KOs) meets Alexander Fedorov (17-4-1, 10 KOs) at Omega Products International on Friday Oct. 5, in Corona. Thompson Boxing Promotions and Gary Shaw Productions promote the fight card.

It will also be televised on tape delay by Showtime later in the evening.

Perez, a native Colombian, has been gathering a Southern California fan base. He usually fights at the Ontario Doubletree and trains in Santa Fe Springs, California.

This is Perez’s big chance to test his explosive talent against Russia’s Fedorov on a national stage. For tickets or information call (714) 935-0900.

Montiel title fight in Las Vegas Thursday

WBO junior bantamweight titleholder Fernando Montiel (34-2, 25 KOs) defends his title against Colombian southpaw slugger Luis Melendez (25-2-1, 20 KOs) at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino on Thursday Oct. 4, in Las Vegas.

Montiel of Los Mochis, Mexico, fought recently in the Philippines and was awarded a close decision over Z Gorres last February.

Also on the card will be Urbano Antillon, Vanes Martirosyan and Bernabe Concepcion. For more information call (702) 474-4000.

Contenders at Home Depot

Former Contender television reality stars Alfonso Gomez and Sergio Mora will be fighting on Oct. 16, at the Home Depot Center in Dominguez Hills.

Gomez (17-3-2, 8 KOs) meets the rugged Ben Tackie (29-7-1, 17 KOs) in a 10-round

Arum Returns Gold Medal to Golden Boy

Written by David A. Avila

Monday, 01 October 2007 19:00

welterweight bout in the main event.

East L.A.'s Mora (19-0, 4 KOs) faces Elvin Ayala (18-2, 8 KOs) in a scheduled 10-round fight. The former winner of the Contender 1 season was slated to face Kassim Ouma last Sept. 15. But the entire card was lost due to an injury to one of the fighters in the main event Juan Manuel Marquez.

The fight card will be shown on ESPN.

Next week the Diaz wars

Don't forget the upcoming lightweight unification battle between Houston's Juan Diaz (32-0, 16 KOs) and Coachella's Julio Diaz (34-3, 25 KOs) on Oct. 13, at the Sears Centre in Chicago.

Juan Diaz holds the WBA and WBO lightweight titles and Julio Diaz holds the IBF lightweight title.

If you think it's remarkable to have two Diaz's holding world titles, Chicago's David Diaz holds the WBC version of the lightweight title. He wants the winner.

But Julio Diaz said if he wins he wants Nate Campbell who is also on the same fight card.

Why?

"Because I know how he feels when nobody wants to fight you and you feel you're the best," said Julio Diaz. "That's the way I felt. It wasn't a good feeling."