

Manny Pacquiao In The House

Written by David A. Avila
Thursday, 14 February 2008 19:00

As Manny Pacquiao entered the second story boxing gym one of the caretakers began shouting instructions for those people to leave unless they had permission.

Quickly the Wild Card Boxing gym began to empty of non-boxers, boxers and people who visit the famous Hollywood training center.

“I’m not nice to anybody,” said the fed up caretaker.

Outside, below, another of the caretakers kept sentry to keep gawkers from clogging up the small parking lot that always seems to have someone parked and keeping others from leaving the premises.

It’s business as usual when Pacquiao hits town.

In about four weeks Pacquiao is scheduled to meet WBC junior lightweight titleholder Juan Manuel Marquez at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in Las Vegas. It’s a rematch of their fight that took place four years ago.

A trio of Pacman’s followers walk into the gym and shake hands with the regulars at the boxing gym. Also training at the facility is O’Neil Bell who is getting ready for his upcoming IBF elimination bout against Tomasz Adamek of Poland on April 19.

In the past Bell trained in the East Coast, but for this fight he’s stuck a stick in the California sunshine to work his way back to championship shape.

“I like to move around. I don’t like to get stale in one gym. After a while you don’t really get better,” said Bell, the former cruiserweight champion of the world. “This place is very diverse. There are all kinds of different people that come here. I like that.”

As various Filipino fighters walk through the gym Bell wants to know who each of them are. He shakes hands with each one, then sits back and takes a look at the sparring that’s about to take place.

Normally the gym is so crowded it’s difficult to walk from one end to the other though it’s no more than 50 feet in diameter.

Sparring with Pacquiao was Oxnard’s David Rodela. He’s become a favorite of Pacquiao and resembles Marquez in height and reach. But though each has a different boxing style, Rodela uses his jab in the same fashion and can take a pretty good punch.

You need to have a good chin when you spar with Pacman.

Manny Pacquiao In The House

Written by David A. Avila

Thursday, 14 February 2008 19:00

Also in the gym is a tall brunette named Elizabeth Parr. Only a few people in the gym have seen her before though when she shadow boxes and works on the speed bag its apparent she knows what he is doing.

Owner Freddie Roach said he's seen her in the gym two times this week and asks others who might know her.

I let Freddie know that she's a pretty good boxer.

Roach was told by someone that she won some amateur tournaments and wonders why she never won the U.S. National Championships. Then he's told that she not only won the nationals, but did it four consecutive times at both the junior welterweight and welterweight levels.

Parr is her new name through marriage, but most know her as Liz Quevedo. At 5-10 in height and with stopping power in either hand, some say she could be the next dominant force in female pro boxing. She continues working on the heavy bag.

Meanwhile Pacman has a new sparring partner who looks much heavier than Rodela. The two exchange some brutal combinations but the speedy Pacquiao is too difficult to hit squarely.

It's a good thing too. The guy he's sparring is Daniel Cervantes who boxes as a lightweight, but looks more like a junior middleweight at the moment. He takes some ribbing from Joey Roach about his weight.

Pacquiao and Cervantes are engaging in some lively action. It's always good when you spar somebody new that has a different mode of attack. The few rounds they spar are energetic. It seems Pacman can unload more freely because Cervantes is a bigger guy. Few guys in the featherweight division can withstand Pacquiao's power.

After the sparring is done Pacquiao begins working on the heavy bag, pounding it with a flurry of combinations that look like a blur. He's always intense and focused. The Filipino bomber has not changed since I first saw him in 2001. Nobody works harder and gives more in the gym. All of the great ones train like that.

As Pacquiao worked on the heavy bag, Roach walked over to Liz Parr and asked to see her hit the mitts. They worked for about three rounds with Roach stopping every so often to change her stance a bit or the angle of her punches. It looks like he might take her under his wing. We'll see. She could be a monster in female boxing.

Boxing chatter

Undefeated lightweight prospect John Molina (9-0, 7 KOs) faces Oscar Marin (3-4) at the Quiet Cannon Country Club in Montebello on Friday Feb. 15. Also on the fight card promoted by All Star Boxing will be Artyom Hovanesian (5-0-1) in a welterweight bout against Ricardo Delgado (2-0). For tickets and information call (323) 816-6200.

Manny Pacquiao In The House

Written by David A. Avila

Thursday, 14 February 2008 19:00

Brian “Hawaiian Punch” Vitoria, the former junior flyweight world champion, is on the Feb. 16 fight card in Las Vegas. Vitoria will face veteran Cesar Lopez at the MGM Grand in a junior bantamweight match.

Mia St. John said she could be fighting on a late April fight card in Mexico for a title. It could be her last professional boxing appearance. “I have an MMA fight in May that takes place in Hawaii,” said St. John, who won her first MMA fight in Hawaii last month. “I may retire from boxing.”

Oscar De La Hoya’s autobiography is out. The East Los Angeles boxer’s book is published by Harpers Entertainment and is called “American Son.” It chronicles De La Hoya’s rise to superstardom and the various points of his life.