CAYMAN ISLANDS-Surrounded by serene water, it's difficult to imagine that in a few days super middleweight hopeful Andre Ward will be under fire from an opponent who grew up on an island.

The warmth of the ocean fresh air at 80 degrees can melt away any thoughts of pressure, work or anger.

But Ward can't enjoy it.

Northern California's Ward needs a win over Dominican Jerson Ravelo (18-2, 12 KOs) to capture the NABO super middleweight title at the Truman Bodden Sports Complex in Georgetown, Cayman Islands on Friday June 20. The showdown will be aired on Showtime.

"I'm settling in," said Ward, 24, who arrived several days ago.

At stake for the former U.S. Olympian who captured the gold medal in 2004 is an opportunity to crash the upper tier of the super middleweights that have been ruled by the likes of Wales Joe Calzaghe, Denmark's Mikkel Kessler and soon Ohio's Kelly Pavlik.

The speedy Ward has the tools to immobilize even the best fighters in the 168-pound division. When he captured the Olympic gold medal he became one of the chosen fighters like Oscar De La Hoya, who needed a mere three years to win a world title.

Despite his blinding speed Ward is not in a hurry.

"I think I'm barely getting comfortable," says Ward (15-0, 10 KOs) who has fought as low as 159 pounds but feels more comfortable at 168 pounds. "In Greece (2004 Olympics) I fought at 178 pounds."

Once he turned professional, he realized that not only was the extra weight not a good fit, but his fighting style was out of step too.

"I had been boxing as an amateur for a decade," says Ward. "The whole objective was to hit and not get hit. Now I'm settling into a pro style."

Fighting in a pro style presents an abundance of dangers for the Oakland-based fighter who was more accustomed to zipping around the ring and seldom slowing down. Now he's slowly learning the professional academics of blocking, slipping and countering while standing right in front of opponents.

It's a scary scenario after fighting in a different style for more than 10 years.

Facing Ward is the athletic but injury-prone Ravelo, a former amateur standout who felt short of achieving the success expected of him.

“This is one of the last shots he’s going to have,” said Ward about his next opponent.

Ravelo, a former Olympian for the Dominican Republic in 2000, was once touted as an impressive prospect too. But injuries always seemed to stop him just as he was about to make a move. And when he maintained a semblance of health, he just couldn’t get over the hump in losses to Allan Green and David Lopez.

Like Ward said, this is could be his last chance.

“I’m expecting the best Ravelo there can be to show up,” said Ward, who recently became the father of a baby girl. “This division is becoming like the welterweight division, one of the best in boxing.”

Ward wants to be the super middleweight champion.

“I want to pave my own legacy,” Ward says.

Other bouts feature heavyweight contender Fast Eddie Chambers, looking to save his spot in line against young upstart Raphael Butler who fights out of Minnesota. The USBA title is at stake. Also on the fight card is Ireland’s Wayne “Pocket Rocket” McCullough, the former bantamweight world champion now living in Las Vegas. He meets California’s Juan Ruiz, a rugged fighter out of Santa Clarita in a featherweight match. Ronald Hearns, the son of Tommy Hearns, is also on the card and fights Jose Luis Gonzalez.