Many people see boxing as a brutal, even primordial, exercise. Super flyweight champion Cristian Mijares doesn't even recognize the sport they describe.

"Intelligence will actually beat strength,'' the slick boxing WBC-WBA champion said this week as the days shortened toward his Nov. 1 unification fight with hard-punching Vic Darchinyan. If he's right about that, he's got the proper opponent to prove it with.

Darchinyan may be one of the hardest punchers in boxing, a 115-pound mighty mite who has 24 knockouts among his 30 victories and a deserved reputation as an attack at all cost practitioner of the polar opposite of the manner in which Mijares approaches prize fighting. To Mijares, boxing is chess in shorts. It is a game of intelligence, speed and quick reaction, not one of brute strength and unadulterated aggression. It is the sweet science, a science he believes he has mastered and that Darchinyan knows too little about.

Mijares intends to exhibit that mastery at Darchinyan's expense at the Home Depot Center outside Los Angeles, boxing the IBF champion into a frenzy of frustration in the same way he did Jorge Arce when he outpointed him by a wide margin.

Predictably, the tough talking Darchinyan has shown little respect for his opponent or his fighting style, telling anyone who will listen (not that you have a choice if you're in his vicinity) that, "I will destroy him badly.

"No one will remember him after I finish him. Who remembers fighters that are running?''

Tell that to Willie Pep, Mijares (35-3-2, 15 KO) would counter. Although he is of a more soft-spoken bent he is adamant about one thing. There will be a graduate school course in boxing being offered on Nov. 1 by a professor of pugilism. That professor will not be named Vic Darchinyan.

"He talks a little bit too much,'' said Mijares in what passes for bravado for him. "Words will not prove anything. What will be proven is the fact that I have much more ability in the ring than Darchinyan, and I expect that if everything goes my way, to take those three belts back home with me on Nov. 1st.

"I'm going to say one thing now and I want to make sure everybody understands. He's thinking he's going to break me in half. He's going to knock me out. I'm smart and strong at the same time. So I want everybody not to be surprised if I end up knocking out Vic Darchinyan on November first.

"Doesn't matter what I say. Doesn't matter what he says. Everything will be proven on November first. It's not words. It's going to be punch by punch, blow by blow and the better man's going to win and that's going to be me. The more he talks the more motivated I am to

beat him to try to shut him up.''

Where Darchinyan wields an ax, Mijares is a surgeon. He does his work deftly and with irritating accuracy. The effect is cumulative and as the rounds and the score begin to mount, opponents suddenly realize they are being beaten to death with a velvet hammer.

No one blow takes them out, as Darchinyan is capable of doing. It is an accumulation of bug bites until suddenly you move to a new picnic ground. That is what Victor Darchinyan is facing on Nov. 1 whether he knows it yet or not – no picnic.

“I’m not only just an intelligent fighter in the ring, I’m also a strong fighter,'' Mijares said. “I’ve faced other opponents in which I have had to trade (punches). I trade in a smart way.

“Vic Darchinyan is not a fighter. He’s just a puncher. I’ve been studying his style. He’s saying he’s got ability and all that but he’s only got one way of fighting.''

Mijares, conversely, has many. He is adaptable and arrogant in the way a great master of technology can be. He does not boast, as Darchinyan does, of the violence he will do to you. He simply argues he is more proficient at the dark trade than you are and promises you will pay a price for your lack of knowledge.

Normally a fighter like Mijares can long labor in anonymity because in boxing, as in most contact sports, collisions sell and he is not about collisions. He’s about one-car accidents. Your car, not his.

Yet he is already on most lists of pound-for-pound best fighters and while still a relative unknown to all but the sport’s aficionados there is a respect for the way he fights and the way he beats his opponents that has transcended both his size and his relative lack of punching power.

He wins this not with the one crushing combination as Darchinyan is capable of but rather by doing over and over the two most basic things in the sport – hitting while not being hit. Spend an hour with such a person and you begin to understand what boxing, as an art form, is all about.

“I love guys at smaller weight classes that have star potential,'' said Mijares’ promoter, Lou DiBella. “When I was at HBO (senior vice president for sports programming) I started Boxing After Dark. The guys I started it with were (small) guys like Kevin Kelley, Marco Antonio Barrera, Erik Morales, Junior Jones. None of those guys were making a lot of money or were household names back then.

“There are a couple of things you need when you’re a small fighter. One is to be a big puncher with a big mouth. Examples are Arce and Darchinyan. Or you have to be great and I think Mijares is great. I think he has the ability to be a star.

“He’s already in the Top 10, pound-for-pound. When he beats Darchinyan and has three major belts that’s going to be a move (up) in that direction. As soon as he moves up to 118 pounds

and hits another weight class and people get to see his dominance as a boxer, I expect him to climb up that pound-for-pound list. I think he has the potential to be the best pound-for-pound fighter I've ever worked with.

"Either Vic or Cristian is going to walk out of this fight a lot bigger. I think despite the lack of words coming from Cristian the way they've so flowed out of the mouth of Vic, I expect it to be Cristian that walks out with those three belts.

"He shut up one of the biggest mouths ever at 115 pounds in Mr. Arce and now I think he's going to shut up one of the biggest mouths in all of the lower weight classes.''

So does Mijares, which is one thing he is willing to talk about. Vic Darchinyan can threaten him all he wants but to make good on those threats he first must do what few opponents have done. First he must find Cristian Mijares and then he must hit him.

That will be more difficult than he knows and a lot more difficult that he might imagine.