

29th World Boxing Hall Of Fame Inductions

Written by David A. Avila

Friday, 07 November 2008 19:00

It's the 29th annual World Boxing Hall of Fame induction ceremony and will be packed with a number of boxing's best when Lennox Lewis, Pernell Whitaker, Marvin Johnson and Greg Haugen take their place.

The banquet takes place at the LAX Marriott Hotel on Saturday, Nov. 15, and also includes awards for current boxers and contributors to the sport for a number of other honors including Fighter of the Year.

It was Mexico's Antonio "Tijuana Tornado" Margarito who has been named Fighter of the Year for 2008. After capturing the WBA welterweight title with an impressive stoppage of Puerto Rico's Miguel Cotto and earlier beating Kermit "The Killer" Cintron for the IBF title, he was the boxer chosen most outstanding though several others contended for the honor.

Winners of the Fight of the Year were Israel Vazquez and Rafael Marquez for their ferocious third fight that exploded in front of an awestruck Southern California audience last March 2008. Other fights such as Michael Katsidis-Joel Casamayor took place that had plenty of action, but for pure scientific savagery everything else took second place. Marquez and Vazquez III was boxing at its best.

"It was a brutal fight," said Frank Espinoza, who manages Vazquez. "These guys put their hearts into that fight."

Also awarded this year for their considerable contributions to the sport are Japan's Akihiko Honda, Gilberto Mendoza, Alberto Reyes and Miguel Diaz.

Honda is a second-generation boxing promoter in his country and is considered one of the most influential in the world. Among the world champions he has guided are former titleholders Genaro "Chicanito" Hernandez, Jiro Watanabe and Tsuyoshi Hamada. He currently guides Edwin Valero, Jorge Linares and Hozumi Hasegawa.

Mendoza of Venezuela heads the World Boxing Association and Diaz is a cut man and trainer based in Las Vegas. Reyes is owner of Reyes boxing gloves, which have become the favorite of many of the world's best prizefighters.

Posthumous awards will be given to Cuba's Luis Rodriguez a slick fighting welterweight from the 1950s and 60s, and Guido Bardelli, a light heavyweight champion.

Inducted

Lewis, who now works as an analyst for HBO, held the heavyweight world title three times, engaged in some of the most significant bouts in the last 20 years, including collisions with Evander Holyfield, Hasim Rahman and Vitali Klitschko. He changed the dynamics of

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heavyweight boxing in proving that a man of immense size could be agile, fast and devastating in the ring.

Johnson was a three-time light heavyweight world champion in the division's heyday during the 1970s and 80s and fought notable bouts against Matthew Saad Muhammad, Eddie Gregory and Michael Spinks. The southpaw from Indianapolis, Indiana captured the WBC and WBA titles when that division was loaded with some of the best 175-pounders ever seen at one time.

Whitaker, also known as "Sweet Pea," was a defensive boxing genius who captured world titles in the lightweight, junior welterweight, welterweight and junior middleweight division and fought in a number of great battles with Julio Cesar Chavez, Oscar De La Hoya and Roger Mayweather. He was also a gold medal winner in the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles.

Greg Haugen was a lightweight world champion during the late 1980s when that division was top heavy with talent and he battled against Hector Camacho, Vinny Pazienza, and Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini. He fought Chavez at Mexico City in a fight that drew more than 130,000 people.

Others being awarded are Bob Arum, Richard Schaefer, Lee Baca and Bernard Parks. Ticket prices range from \$100 to \$200. For more information call (626) 964-2414 or visit www.wbhf.org

Congratulations

Vic "Raging Bull" Darchinyan captured the WBA and WBC titles by knocking out Mexico's Cristian Mijares and now holds all three major titles including the IBF junior bantamweight titles. The Armenian slugger beat Mijares at the Home Depot in Carson last Saturday. He is a former IBF flyweight titleholder.

Darchinyan says he'd like to face WBO titleholder Fernando Montiel of Mexico, who is a former flyweight champion too.

Also on the victory parade is Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. for his conquest of Matt Vanda in a junior middleweight rematch. Chavez seeks a match with De La Hoya or an elite junior middleweight such as Vernon Forrest. That's a fight that could be easily made.

Mexico's popular Jorge Arce has challenged junior featherweight world champion Israel Vazquez, who is anxious to get a deal signed. Arce has never fought at the 122-pound weight level and would be a serious underdog against the super strong Vazquez.

Arreola in Big Bear

Riverside heavyweight Chris "The Nightmare" Arreola will be training in Big Bear in preparation for his showdown with fellow heavyweight contender Travis Walker that takes place on Nov. 29, in Ontario, Ca. at the brand new Citizens Business Bank Arena.

Also training with Arreola is another Riverside prizefighter, Josesito Lopez, who will be fighting

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Mongolia's Bayan Jargal. Lopez will be fighting in an eight round junior welterweight bout against the pressure fighting style of Jargal who appeared at Soboba Casino in September. He won by second round knockout. Lopez is making his second appearance as a junior welterweight. He lost to Edgar Santana last April in Florida despite scoring two knockdowns.

Tickets are on sale at Citizens Business Bank Arena or at www.Ticketmaster.com

Fights on television

Sat. HBO pay-per-view, 6 p.m., Roy Jones Jr. (52-4) vs. Joe Calzaghe (45-0); Zab Judah (36-6) vs. Ernest Johnson (18-2-1); Gato Figueroa (19-2) vs. Emanuel Augustus (38-29-6); Dmitriy Salita (28-0-1) vs. Derrick Campos (17-5).