

Robert "The Ghost" Guerrero Returns To L.A.

Written by David A. Avila

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In his last fight Robert "The Ghost" Guerrero delivered a sizzling three-punch combination comparable to a flawless jazz solo or a master painter's rendering.

It was a moment of perfection in the sport.

Guerrero now returns to the ring and faces veteran Edel Ruiz (31-21-4, 22 KOs) on Saturday Jan. 24, at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. It's his first fight in 11 months but that last picture of the Gilroy boxer delivering a picture perfect knockout is still in the memories of those who saw it.

"It's something that me and my dad worked on," said Guerrero (22-1-1, 15 KOs) of the three-punch combo he landed against Jason Litzau last February in Lemoore, California. "That was prepared just for Jason Litzau."

Guerrero said his father spotted Litzau's tendency to jump back in occasionally after getting hit.

"It was a sneaky combination," Guerrero, 25, said of the left uppercut, right hook and straight left hand delivered. Only the first two punches landed, the third missed as Litzau tumbled. "When the right moment came I delivered."

Now the slender power puncher is moving up in weight from featherweight to junior lightweight. The 130-pound weight division is dripping with talent.

"I wanted to make it happen. It was getting kind of tough losing the weight," Guerrero said of now fighting four pounds heavier. "I feel a lot stronger, a lot better."

Other things have changed for Guerrero, who now fights for Golden Boy Promotions. The decision was self-made to allow him to battle the other stalwarts in the junior lightweight division.

"There's guys like Rocky Juarez, Jorge Linares and Juan Manuel Marquez," says Guerrero adding that two of those fighters are also with Golden Boy and easily attainable. "I want to fight all of the time."

Anxious to return to the prize ring, Guerrero has been working hard despite the lay off and promises to fight three or four more times in 2009. He wants to make up for the lean 2008 and he especially wants one more request granted.

"I want to fight in my hometown," Guerrero says. "My fans deserve it."

But expect many fans to arrive from Northern California and other southwestern states who have seen Guerrero blossom into a precise and skilled pro boxer.

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Early in his career, he was knocking out many fighters with the regular one-two combination; now, the southpaw slugger has bolstered his weaponry with uppercuts, hooks and counters that make him even more dangerous. He also has become much more difficult to hit.

“That’s why they call me the Ghost,” laughs Guerrero.

Berto retains WBC title

Andre Berto’s needed to win the final round to gain a decision over former world champion Luiz Collazo in their fight last Saturday in Mississippi. As usual, Berto tried to overwhelm with his speed and power and tasted a perfect counter left hand from the southpaw Puerto Rican. He was sent sprawling across the ring.

Back and forth the two boxers battled for 12 rounds. In round four Berto was deducted a point for repeatedly holding. He could have easily been deducted more for the tactic that is illegal under boxing rules.

The last two rounds saw Berto out punch Collazo and take the razor close win 114-113 on two cards and 116-111 on one card.

“He’s an animal,” said Berto of his opponent.

Could Berto be in line for the winner between Antonio Margarito and Shane Mosley?

Mexicali results

Former world champion Jose Luis Castillo knocked out James Wayka in the second round of their welterweight fight in Mexicali on Saturday.

Castillo is not just trying to prove he can still fight; he’s attempting to prove he can make the suggested weight requirements. Several times in the past he could not lose enough weight the day before a fight and forced cancellation of fights with the late Diego Corrales and Timothy Ray Bradley.

Maybe he’s ready to come back?

French champion

France’s Myriam Lamare (16-2, 9 KOs) will be fighting world champion Holly Holm (22-1-3) at Isleta Resort Casino in Albuquerque, New Mexico on Friday. The world title fight will not be televised.

It’s rare that a world champion based in Europe ventures to America because of the low purses. But Lamare, who is a former WBA junior middleweight titleholder, wants another world title and hopes to grab Holm’s belt.

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Holt recently fought to a draw with Mary Jon Sanders in a rematch. The redhead won the first match by unanimous decision.