About 120 media people strangled any free flow through the Wild Card Boxing gym with cameras shouldered, microphones in hand, handset recorders and notebooks in tow.

It's media day for Filipino superstar Manny "Pacman" Pacquiao.

Walking through the mass a smallish fighter is fiddling with his hand wraps as every single reporter and photographer focuses on other things.

This is Gerry Penalosa's world.

Penalosa is moving up in weight to challenge current WBO junior featherweight titleholder Juan Manuel Lopez (24-0, 22 KOs). The fight takes place in Bayamon, Puerto Rico on Saturday April 25, but only a couple of the media even recognize the Filipino going through his work out routine.

"Manny Pacquiao is my hero," said Penalosa, a gritty veteran with more than 50 pro fights and winner of two world titles. "He's done so much for the Philippine people and for Filipino boxers."

Penalosa is a big underdog against Lopez who many call one of the best fighters below lightweight. Out of 24 fights the Boricua has knocked out 22. Few give the Filipino much of a chance despite his former victories.

"Lopez is a good fighter," said Penalosa (54-6-2, 36 KOs), who has been through the wars and never been knocked out. "He'll be under a lot of pressure fighting in his home."

The three-time world champion in both the junior bantamweight and bantamweight division has battled against several world champions and despite usually fighting bigger and taller guys, he doesn't give them room to breathe.

"It's my experience that helps me," says Penalosa, who trains in Hollywood at times and in the Philippines. "I know what to do."

Penalosa knows that Lopez will be fighting in front of thousands of his hometown fans and knows that it comes with an extra burden.

"All the pressure is on him," said Penalosa, 36, who is three inches shorter and 11 years older than Lopez. "He may be faster, stronger and younger, but I have more experience. I'm going to use my experience to beat him."

Two years ago, he faced Jhonny Gonzalez another much bigger fighter who held the WBO title and was deemed the favorite. Though for six rounds the Mexico City fighter had a solid lead, all it took was one well-placed left hook to the body to end the fight dramatically and suddenly.

“It’s experience,” Penalosa says.

Lopez has blitzed through two opponents since stopping Mexico’s Daniel Ponce De Leon who had beaten Penalosa by close decision. Like Penalosa, he’s a left-hander too.

When asked about Lopez all Penalosa does is smile.

“He’s a really good fighter he’s going to be tough,” says Penalosa with a smile. Then he drifts back into the crowd of reporters who are almost unaware of the calm prizefighter.

The fight will be televised on HBO.

Philippine results

IBF flyweight titleholder Nonito Donaire stormed through undefeated Raul Martinez (24-1, 14 KOs) knocking him down four times in three rounds before the referee stopped the fight last Saturday. A left uppercut by Donaire proved to be the final blow at the Araneta Coliseum in Manila.

“I got him with some good counter punches,” said Donaire (21-1, 14 KOs), adding that he will be moving up in weight. “I’ve definitely got to move up in weight.”

In the co-main event, Brian Viloria won the IBF junior flyweight world title by dethroning Mexico’s Ulises Solis (28-2-2, 20 KOs) by 11th round knockout. It’s Viloria’s second world title.

“It’s a storybook ending,” said Viloria (25-2, 15 KOs) who formerly held the WBC junior flyweight title in 2006. “I’ve been fighting in supermarket parking lots and swap meets. You can never write a better ending than this.”

Fights on television

Sat. HBO, 10 p.m., Juan Manuel Lopez (24-0) vs. Gerry Penalosa (54-6-2).

Sat. Showtime, 9 p.m., Carl Froch (24-0) vs. Jermain Taylor (28-2-1).