

Big Tests For Perro Angulo & Yonhhy Perez

Written by David A. Avila
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Mexico's Alfredo "Perro" Angulo and Colombia's Yonhhy Perez have a lot of things in common though size isn't one of them. Angulo (15-0, 12 KOs), a junior middleweight from Mexicali, steps into the upper tier of the weight division with a battle against Kermit "The Killer" Cintron (30-2-1, 27 KOs) on Saturday in Florida. Perez (18-0, 13 KOs), a bantamweight from Cartagena, also steps into the lofty side of the 118-pounders with his match against Silence Mabuza (22-2, 18 KOs) on Friday in South Africa. The red light is blinking for both fighters. Both Angulo and Perez make Southern California their adopted home and have become part of the regular boxing landscape in their quest to win a world title and perhaps put a little money in the bank.

"I save all my money," says Angulo, 26, who moved to Downey, California to be closer to Maywood where he trains regularly. "Where I come from the money I make in boxing is a lot of money." Growing up in the border town of "Chicali" as it's known to Mexicanos, is an adventure itself. Drug wars, poverty and fighting are all part of the subculture that has overtaken much of the international border region. Angulo says he was always fighting and was known as the best street fighter in the neighborhood. Boxing wasn't his first love, it was baseball. His position was catcher where he would throw out opposing runners with ease. That powerful right hand has also helped him a little in prizefighting. With his Mexican style of pressure fighting it would be easy to surmise that he had little amateur experience. However, the fighter known as Perro for his dogged style actually represented Mexico in the 2004 Olympics. He has plenty of international boxing experience.

"I fought in Europe, South America, the United States," Angulo says. "I've seen all the different styles."

Colombia's Perez was a latecomer to pro boxing after spending a decade working for the Colombian Army. Like Angulo, the bantamweight is very thrifty about saving money from his prizefighting.

"This is a dream to be making this kind of money from fighting," said Perez, who lives in Santa Fe Springs, that borders Downey. "I send all my money to my family." Perez has bought two homes in Colombia with money accumulated from fighting in the United States. The bantamweight is co-promoted by Thompson Boxing Promotions and Gary Shaw Productions. Now 30, Perez realizes he doesn't have a lot of time to rise through the ranks at a deliberate pace. He's only been fighting professionally for about four years.

"When I was in the army I would box too," said Perez, who was given an apartment by the army after he retired. He rents out that apartment. "Everybody knows that to become a champion you need to come to the United States." For a short while Perez lived with fellow bantamweight contender Abner Mares in Montebello. Now he lives in the sleepy small suburb of Santa Fe Springs where he is a regular figure to the residents.

"Everybody knows him," says Alex Camponovo, who represents Thompson Boxing. "They all

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wave to him when they see him walking to the store.” Perez has a family waiting for him back in Cartagena. “It’s always been my dream to be fighting for a world title,” Perez says with humility. “Silence Mabuza is a good fighter but he can be beaten.”

Angulo and Perez don’t train with each other but only a few miles separates them when they train. This weekend could be the beginning to much larger purses. But money isn’t on their minds.

“People always tell me when are you going to fight this guy or that guy,” says Angulo, who early on was a regular sparring partner for Antonio Margarito. “I always tell them I’m not afraid of anybody. That’s why I train hard so I can take anybody’s punches.”

You can take that to the bank.