If Victor Ortiz is around your vicinity sooner or later he'll walk up to you, tap on your shoulder and with a smile the size of Kansas and say, "Hi."

Seldom will Ortiz look grim or abrasive, it's just not in his nature. But deep inside his soul sits the essence and maturity of a man much older than his 22 years.

Abandonment tends to do that to a person, and Ortiz, who is better known as Vicious Victor Ortiz for the pummeling he plasters on opponents, was left abandoned by both parents and left to fend for himself and his brother at age 13.

Ortiz (24-1-1, 19 KOs) seems to treat opponents like proxies for his deserting parents and next on the list is hard-hitting Argentine Marcos Maidana (25-1, 24 KOs) on Saturday, June 27. The fight takes place at Staples Center, for the interim WBA junior welterweight title.

"There's no pressure fighting at the Staples Center," says Ortiz who ambles around with a smile when not boxing. "I don't even think about it. All I think about is proving to my parents they were wrong."

Another thing that needs to be proven may not fall entirely on his lap, but whether or not the wholesome fighter from Oxnard can actually fill the seats of the large arena where the L.A. Lakers regularly max out and where a fellow fighter from Pomona set an attendance record.

"He looks like the real deal," says Sugar Shane Mosley who recently filled the same venue with 20,000 raucous fans last January.

When Pomona's Mosley fought Mexico's Antonio Margarito for the welterweight title every seat was filled in the nine-year-old arena where the NBA champion L.A. Lakers play. Last Jan. 24, the battle for the WBA title broke the all-time attendance record for an event of any kind at that venue.

The ability to attract that many fans to an event takes a semblance of skill, intrigue, popularity and in some cases staying power. No flash in the pan can hope to grab the attention of penny-pinching boxing fans.

"I've been fighting a long time and I think I've shown that I have a fighting style people like to see," said Mosley by telephone. "I'm a warrior and I'm willing to fight anybody to prove I'm the best."

Mosley, who hopes to fight Pound for Pound champion Manny Pacquiao in November, says he sees Oxnard's Ortiz as possessing those tangibles and intangibles needed to attract the masses to a boxing event.

“He’s a potential superstar in my estimation,” said Mosley, who knocked out the heavily favored Margarito to win the WBA welterweight title. “He’s proven that he has the tools to be a champion.”

When not in the boxing ring, Ortiz looks like the nice kid next door who goes to church on Sunday and says “yes ma’am” to women with a smile. Actually, you would be right in thinking he’s a young gentleman with impeccable manners.

Inside the ring he’s known as Vicious Victor Ortiz and that’s not a misnomer. Once the bell rings the left-handed slugger attacks like he has something to prove. And he does.

Abandoned by his mother, then his father, both Mexican immigrants living in Kansas, Ortiz grew up fast but somehow managed to keep those polite qualities and vowed he would make a name for himself in the sport of boxing. So far he’s headed in the right direction.

Ortiz, 22, brought his younger brother to live with him four years ago and has taken over the adult role as a parent.

When people ask Ortiz if he feels emotional pressure fighting on the main event at Staples Center he simply smiles politely and offers a reply. But looking at those dark eyes burns a deeper commitment to winning as if losing a fight means losing it all.

Opposing Ortiz is Maidana of Buenos Aires who has knocked out all but two opponents in 26 pro fights.

“I’ve seen tapes of his fights. He has a lot of power,” Ortiz said of Maidana. “He likes to bang and so do I.”

Maidana has knocked out Mexican fighters Silverio Ortiz, Arturo Morua and Manuel Garnica. All are known for their durability.

Ortiz respects Maidana’s power but relies on his own gifts to decide the outcome.

“Everything I do is to prove I’m worthy,” Ortiz says.

Mosley, who knows a thing or two about worthiness, claims Ortiz can be the next Southern California gate attraction.

“I think he’s going to be the next super star of Golden Boy (Promotions). He has the right attitude, he’s punching hard and fast,” Mosley says of Ortiz. “I see a lot of good things from him.”

Tickets are still available at Staples Center. (800) 745-3000.

Timothy “Desert Storm” Bradley

Palm Spring's Timothy Bradley, the WBO and WBC titleholder, will be fighting at Agua Caliente Casino Resort and Spa against former lightweight world champion Nate Campbell on Saturday Aug. 1, said Thompson Boxing Promotions.

"Everything is set for Timothy Bradley to fight at home for the first time," said Alex Camponovo of Thompson Boxing. "It's going to be a great fight."

For tickets and information call (800) 585-3737.

Fights on television

Fri. ESPN2, 7 p.m., Daniel Jacobs (16-0) vs. George Walton (20-3).

Sat. pay-per-view, 6 p.m., Juan Manuel Lopez (25-0) vs. Olivier Lontchi (18-0-2).

Sat. Showtime, 9 p.m., Arthur Abraham (29-0, 23 KOs) vs. Mahir Oral (25-1-2, 10 KOs).

Sat. HBO, 10 p.m. Victor Ortiz (24-1-1) vs. Marcos Maidana (25-1).