

California's Crawling With Fights

Written by David A. Avila
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Lots of fights are happening in the western portion of North America especially in Cali.

Let's get started.

From female title fights to super middleweights and beyond California and Baja California are hosting competing fight cards on the same day within a 600 mile span on Saturday. On Friday there is only one notable fight card.

Junior welterweight prospect Josesito Lopez (25-3, 14 KOs) of Riverside tangles with Colorado's Anthony Mora (15-3, 10 KOs) in an eight round bout at the Doubletree Hotel in Ontario, California. Thompson Boxing Promotions is hosting the fight card.

If Thompson Boxing Promotion rings bell it's because they promote WBO junior welterweight world titleholder Timothy "Desert Storm" Bradley and are the powerhouse of club shows in Southern California. They also have number one bantamweight contender Yonhhy Perez who recently knocked out Silence Mabuza in his own turf.

Lopez has been fighting for Thompson from the beginning of his pro career and is slowly emerging to the top. The close friend of Riverside heavyweight contender Chris Arreola is also trained by Henry Ramirez.

"Jose is beginning to regain his focus," said Ramirez, who is prepared Lopez in Van Nuys alongside Arreola. "He has his weight under control."

One thing Lopez has is size. Though 25 he seems to continue to grow and is now almost six feet tall. Fighting at 130 is no longer probable for the lean fighter.

"I feel comfortable fighting at 140," said Lopez, who also tried 135 pounds for a while. He's also comfortable sparring with elite fighters such as Venezuela's Edwin Valero.

"He destroyed the other sparring partners so it made me realize I can fight with the big guys," said Lopez.

Also on the card is lightning lightweight Dominic Salcido, Patrick Lopez, Aaron Garcia and Jesus Hernandez. It's a pretty sterling fight card that would spice up any ESPN television card or Showtime for that matter.

Kelsey Jeffries vs. Ana Julaton

In San Jose, former world champion Kelsey Jeffries of Gilroy, California and Ana Julaton of Daly City, California meet at the HP Pavilion for the vacant IBA junior featherweight world title.

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It's the main event.

Jeffries has already claimed several world titles and fought some of the best female fighters in the world, and now she's in the ring with a fellow Northern Californian.

"I expect a lot of my fans to be there," said Jeffries (41-9-1), who has 50 pro fights in her career. Only a few others can make the same claim. "It's going to be a great fight."

Julaton (4-1-1) truly expects to win despite the severe experience edge in Jeffries favor.

"I have a great trainer in Nonito Donaire Sr.," said Julaton, who adds that she may not be fighting much more after this fight win or lose. "I know Kelsey has the experience but we have a great plan."

James Toney and Andre Ward

On Saturday Sept. 12, a few hundred miles south, it's James "Lights Out" Toney returning to Pechanga Resort and Casino in Temecula to fight Matthew Greer (12-5, 11 KOs) in a 10-round heavyweight bout.

Toney always does well at Pechanga.

"I love Pechanga," said Toney (71-6-3, 43 KOs) who beat Jason Robinson, Rydell Booker and was beating Hasim Rachman there last year but the fight was stopped due to an accidental clash of heads. "This guy is a good fighter but I'll knock him out."

Toney just wants to keep his place in line for a title fight with the winner between Arreola and WBC titleholder Vitali Klitschko.

"They told me I got next," Toney said. "I'll fight Vitalia or Wilhemina Klitschko."

The co-main event is former U.S. Olympic gold medal winner Andre Ward (19-0, 12 KOs) against Shelby Pudwill (22-3-1) in a 10-round super middleweight bout televised by Showtime. Also being shown will be ward's next opponent should he win Mikkel Kessler. The WBA champion is fighting in Denmark on the same day against Gusmyr Perdomo. If both Kessler and Ward win as expected they will meet in New York City as part of the six-man super middleweight tournament that gets underway in October.

The Pechanga fight card also features a dazzling young junior featherweight named Rico Ramos who fights out of Pico Rivera. He's exceptionally talented.

Mariana Juarez in Rosarito Beach

Across the international border, just south of Tijuana, Mexico, the exceptional Mariana

"Mexican Barbie" Juarez (21-5-3, 10 KOs) defends her WBC interim flyweight title against

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Colombia's Susan Vazquez (4-3-1) at Rosarito Beach.

"I've never seen her fight," said Juarez, who lives in Mexico City. "After this fight I want to fight Ina Menzer."

Juarez also hopes to return to Southern California.