

Small Island, BIG TALENT . . .

MIGUEL COTTO'S PUERTO RICAN ROOTS YIELD HIGH RESULTS FOR PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES AND CELEBRITIES

LAS VEGAS (November 5, 2009) - **Jennifer Lopez ...Carlos Beltran ... Roberto Clemente. . .** it takes longer to escape a New York City traffic jam than to drive the length of Puerto Rico, which measures only 100 miles by 35 miles. . .

Benicio Del Toro... Reggie Jackson...Chi Chi Rodriguez

. . .the population of Puerto Rico is about 3.9-million. That means the entire Commonwealth has fewer residents than at least a dozen metropolitan areas in the USA. . .

Marc Antony... Carmelo Anthony ... Freddie Prinze Sr

. . .yet the number of sports and entertainment stars and superstars produced by this island is overwhelming.

Miguel Cotto, who takes on Manny Pacquiao on Saturday, November 14 live on HBO Pay-Per-View®, is today's brightest boxing star from Puerto Rico, which has produced more champions and legends per square mile than any place in the world.

The island people's lives have been seeped in the love of the game and the thrill of a fight, as Puerto Rico has produced successful baseball and boxing superstars for decades. As for boxing champions, the first of more than 50 world titlists was **Sixto Escobar**, who twice reigned as bantamweight champion in the mid-'30s. In the '60s, lightweight and junior welterweight champion **Carlos**

Ortiz

was the first Puerto Rican to be recognized as a pound-for-pound great.

One decade later, three-division champion **Wilfred Benitez** established a reputation as the best defensive fighter of his era. Benitez won his first world title at age 17, still a record. In the '70s and '80s,

Wilfredo Gomez, who was another three-division titlist, flaunted a rare combination of power and boxing skills. Gomez made 17 successful defenses of the junior featherweight title and knocked out hall of famers

Lupe Pintor

and

Carlos Zarate

Immediately preceding Cotto was wildly popular **Felix "Tito" Trinidad**, who won titles at welterweight, junior middleweight, and middleweight. Trinidad reigned as a champion from 1993 to 2001, and defeated Fernando Vargas, Pernell Whitaker, and Oscar De La Hoya.

Small Island, Big Stars

Written by TSS Press

Wednesday, 04 November 2009 19:00

Other notable Puerto Rican champions: **John Ruiz**, who was the first Hispanic to win a portion of the world heavyweight title; **Carlos**

DeLeon, who won the WBC cruiserweight crown four times; charismatic junior lightweight and lightweight champion

Hector Camacho

; power punching two-division champion

Edwin Rosario

;

Esteban DeJesus

, who defeated Roberto Duran; light heavyweight champion

Jose Torres

; and reigning light flyweight champion

Ivan Calderon

, who is unbeaten in 34 career bouts.

Now it's Cotto's time to perform on the biggest stage of his career and should he be victorious, he will find his place atop the 2009 leader board of great athletes and stars emanating from this small but prideful island.

Categorized List of Fighters, Athletes and Celebrities

Boxers

[Benítez, Wilfred](#), three division champion, member International Boxing Hall of Fame

[Calderón, Iván](#), reigning light flyweight champion who remains unbeaten

[Camacho, Héctor "Macho"](#), sensational junior lightweight and lightweight titlist

Cotto, Miguel, former junior welterweight titlist and reigning welterweight champion

De Jesus, Esteban, lightweight champion who defeated Roberto Duran

[De León, Carlos "Sugar"](#), four-time cruiserweight champion

Escalera, Alfredo, junior lightweight champion

Escobar, Sixto, first Puerto Rican World Champion (bantamweight), Hall of Famer

Gomez, Wilfredo, three-division champion, Hall of Famer

Lopez, Juan Manuel, unbeaten reigning junior featherweight champion

[Montañez, Pedro](#), fought for lightweight and welterweight titles, Hall of Famer

Small Island, Big Stars

Written by TSS Press

Wednesday, 04 November 2009 19:00

[Ortiz, Carlos](#) , lightweight and junior welterweight champion, Hall of Famer

[Rosario, Edwin "El Chapo"](#) , lightweight and junior welterweight champion, Hall of Famer

[Ruíz, John](#) , first Hispanic to win a portion of the heavyweight title

[Serrano, Samuel](#) , longtime and two-time junior lightweight champion

Trinidad, Felix "Tito", three division champion, Pound-for-Pound legend

Vazquez, Wilfredo, three-division champion

[Venegas, Juan Evangelista](#) , first Puerto Rican to win an Olympic Gold Medal (1948)