

## Molina Bringing Big Guns To Pechanga

Written by Ralph Gonzalez

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When you're a professional fighter, there's no bigger gift from nature than having paralyzing punching power.

Enter lightweight John Molina Jr. (18-0, 14 KO's) of Covina, California who scored TKOs over 17 of the 24 fighters he faced during his short amateur career. "They were wearing headgear too so we knew there was real power in both hands. That's when we realized that my style was better suited for the pros," stated the twenty six year old Mexican-American.

Currently trained by Joe Goossen, Molina's natural talent and passion for the sport is part of his genetic makeup. His father, grandfather and great grandfather were all aspiring fighters who gave up their fistic ambitions in order to support their families. "They had the tools to become champions but they didn't get the opportunity," recounted Molina. "I've been blessed to be in a better position so that I can take things full circle."

He credits his parents as being partly responsible for his success. John Sr. worked 14 to 16 hour days as a printer in order to help support his son's dream. "My mother and father are my heroes," Molina said. "They've been together since they were fourteen and have always been there for me. They let me live rent free since the beginning of my career when there was no money to be made. They've shown tremendous support and they'll always be the ones I look up to."

Making his pro debut in March of 2006 against Lester Balmores at the Maywood Activity Center was the beginning to what he hopes will be a world title run. "I was a ball of nerves. It was my first step into doing something I've always wanted to do," he remembered. "My dad was reassuring me that everything was going to be fine. I eventually settled down and knocked the guy out in two rounds."

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He plowed through some lower to mid level competition before posting credible knockouts over Efren Hinojosa and Frankie Archuleta. On November 28th, the former wrestling and football standout from Charter Oak High School will get a stern test against the rugged Martin Honorio for the NABF lightweight title. The Mexico City fighter will bring with him a record of 26 wins 4 losses and 14 knockouts to the Pechanga Entertainment Center in Temecula.

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Despite Honorio's loss to Robert "The Ghost" Guerrero by first round stoppage, he holds victories over the well regarded Rogers Mtagwa and current WBO featherweight champion Steven Luevano. In other words, Honorio can't be taken lightly. If Molina's all hype, Honorio will make it known.

"I have to be careful with him. He's got a lot of experience and I know he's bringing his A game," said Molina. "He's a hungry guy trying to make it and that makes him a dangerous opponent. But I'm the younger, stronger fighter and I plan to dictate the pace of the fight."

This will be the first time Molina headlines a major televised boxing card. He's not letting the pressure get to him. "Absolutely not. The fact that I'm going to be headlining on Showtime only makes me work harder," Molina said. "I'm going to prove to the fans that I've arrived and that I'm a force to be reckoned with."

He continued. "The words losing and no are not in my vocabulary. I put in the time and effort. I put in the six days a week, I get up early in the morning to run with one goal and that's to be more than just a world champion, I want to be a legend in the sport. I believe in my ability and the power I possess."

Formerly trained by Ben Lira, Molina made the switch to Joe Goossen when Lira had some family issues he was overwhelmed with. "Training with Joe, it's a match made in heaven," Molina said of the pairing.

"What I've told people before is that I felt like I was driving a Ferrari and could only get it to second gear. Now that I'm with Joe I feel like I'm able to use all the gears."

This a great fight on paper. Molina is accurate, fast and heavy handed. Still, there are questions about his defense that have yet to be answered. Honorio on the other hand, is a rough and durable type who throws wide punches and is susceptible to speed. He put current WBO world champion Steven Luevano through the ringer and handed him his first defeat in November of 2005. Molina realizes the importance of the situation. "This is my biggest fight. No doubt. But I've got the power, the X factor."

There are plenty in the boxing world who believe that Molina's power won't always be enough to get him through a tough fight. That may be true. But any fight can be turned around with just one brutal punch.

The kind Molina throws all too often.

He has to beat Honorio convincingly to quiet all the nay-sayers. "I have to make a statement that night. It's going to be war. I promise you that," Molina said. "Honorio won't be backing down for anyone and I won't either. The audience is paying for a fight and that's what they're going to get."

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The 12 round bout between Molina and Honorio will be televised on Showtime's ShoBox series on Saturday November 28th. Also on the Goossen-Tutor promoted card: Rico Ramos, Charles Whitaker, Shawn Estrada and Javier Molina.

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