

Champion Kina Malpartida Is Peru's Brittany Spears

Written by David A. Avila

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A woman's movement is taking place so don't be surprised to see them on television.

"It's time to change the face of women's boxing," says a Claudia Ollis a Laguna Beach entrepreneur whose taken an interest in the sport. "Especially with women boxing in the next Olympics."

Female boxers seldom get recognition outside of the small boxing gyms where they steadfastly work on their fighting skills.

Every day they take hits to the face and body and work on their boxing drills alongside men in dingy gyms, dim lighting and knowledge that finding a fight is almost more difficult than the actual fight.

Woman's boxing pays very little and there are few venues that put on female fights.

Still, women like Kaliesha "Wild Wild" West, Ana "The Hurricane" Julaton and Peru's fighting sensation Kina Malpartida work with one another giving help with sparring and encouragement.

You wouldn't see Floyd Mayweather doing that for Manny Pacquiao.

Southern California's top bantamweight contender West is traveling to South America to participate on a fight card with Malpartida who's the toast of her country. She's Peru's only world champion in any sport and they love her.

Malpartida (11-3) defends her WBA junior lightweight world title against Colombia's Liliana Palmera (19-6-2, 12 KOs) in her native Peru on Saturday. Also on the same card will be Riverside's West clashing with Brazil's Vannessa Guimaraes (8-2, 7 KOs) in a six round bout.

As Malpartida arrived in Lima, Peru she was met by a crush of media reps from all types of outlets. It's become common for the tall brunette prizefighter to be seen on television, magazine covers, newspaper stories and radio. She's Peru's sports icon and they're starved for a champion.

West, who traveled on the same plane, said nothing in America compares to Malpartida's celebrity in Peru. Wherever Malpartida goes thousands of people run up to her to shake her hand or simply get a glimpse of Peru's champion. Malpartida's trainer has seen it happen on every trip they take to South America.

"Kina is like Brittany Spears in Peru," says Mando Huerta who trains Malpartida. "She can't go anywhere without paparazzi following her."

The flashing cameras and bright television lights pointed in Malpartida's direction are a clue to

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what female boxing can be in the United States. Our country remains one of the few countries that seem to lag behind in embracing female prizefighting.

Ollis, who decided to assist West in gaining a foothold in the marketing world, has big plans for not only the Southern California prizefighter but for all women boxers.

"Why can't women conquer the television market in our country too," said Ollis who is also currently in Peru to watch Malpartida and West. "It makes perfect sense that women fighters like Kaliesha and Kina who are talented and also beautiful should have their fights televised. Why is it only in other countries but not ours?"

Recently the cable television network Showtime invested money in female mixed martial arts and especially in Gina Carano. She lost badly and now that network is stuck with a fighter who has no competition nor Carano's looks.

Bad move.

HBO and Showtime have yet to feature female boxers on their fight cards to date, The reason plain and simple is a lack of knowledge about female boxing. They don't realize there are tons of very skillful and beautiful women fighters in professional fighting especially in the weights below 126 pounds.

West is a perfect example of a TV friendly fighter with great skills. Another is brunette Philippine prizefighter Julaton who fights Maria Villalobos for the WBO junior featherweight world title on Wednesday June 30 in Ontario, Canada.

Both West and Julaton have skill and looks and usually that means viewers. All you have to do is take a look at women's professional tennis to realize that those two components equal television ratings.

But alas, television networks in the U.S. are too afraid to try anything new. Nobody wants to lose their jobs. There are lots of men who hate women's tennis and there will be many who dislike women boxing on television. But believe me there will be far more men who like it and it will attract the female viewers in droves.

Take a chance.

Malpartida is a great example of what can happen if you give a female boxer television exposure.