

TSS PROSPECT WATCH: Mercito Gesta

Written by Ralph Gonzalez
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Being a promising prospect from the Philippines can't be easy these days. With the success of future hall of famer Manny Pacquiao, Filipino fighters are feeling the pressure to perform at a very high level. Mercito "No Mercy" Gesta, who hails from Cebu City, Philippines is no exception.

"Filipinos get very excited when they see someone like Manny succeeding and they want more," said Gesta, who enters the ring as a lightweight (135 lbs). "Manny Pacquiao is a great fighter and I admire what he's done but I want to succeed for myself and make my own name.

The left hander's journey toward that goal continues this Friday night when he takes on Genaro Trazancos in a bout which will be televised on Telefutura from the Casino Del Sol in Tucson, Arizona.

Gesta (18-0-1, 8 KO's) was a former kick-boxer who switched to traditional boxing in order to pursue a career in the higher paying sport.

"My father and I realized that there's more money to be made in boxing so we made the move and so far it's been a great decision," said Gesta. "I love kick-boxing but there's no money in it.

He was only nineteen when he first made the trek to the US. Having first lived in Los Angeles, Gesta eventually made the move to the less frenetic pace of San Diego where he currently lives.

"San Diego is more my kind of city. It's laid back like me," said the good natured 22 year old.

He met his current trainer and co-manager Vincent Parra after working with him as a sparring partner for former world champion Cruz Carbajal. Parra and his father "Bumpy" were training Carbajal for a world title run. Gesta eventually headlined a local promotion where Parra was the matchmaker. "I first saw him when he worked with Cruz. He was a little green but he had great hand-speed and obvious natural ability," said Parra. "After the promotion at The Hard Rock Hotel, Mercito's team changed and I ended up being part of that new team.

When preparing for a fight, Gesta spends most of his time at the Alliance Training Center in Chula Vista and finishes off at the Wildcard Gym in Los Angeles. "There's not as many sparring partners out here so we go to L.A. in the final two to three weeks before he fights," said Parra, who himself was a former pro fighter.

It's a guarantee that Gesta's next performance will be heavily analyzed by boxing fans that can't help but make the comparisons to Manny Pacquiao. Parra feels that Gesta should just go with the flow. "At this point Mercito is embracing the comparisons to Manny. It's a huge compliment of course," he said. "I'm sure there's always going to be that pressure to be as big as Manny but we'll keep him focused on the goal of becoming a world champion.

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“Yeah, the pressure is there, admitted Gesta. “In a way it’s positive because it motivates me to work harder in the gym so I can live up to those expectations. I also expect a lot from myself. I see myself being a world champion in two years.

Gesta is coming off a fourth round win over Oscar Meza in which he looked like the hot prospect everyone’s talking about. His crisp combinations and accurate punches convinced the young Mexican not to come out for a fifth round.

“We studied Meza really well and we came up with a good plan, recalled Gesta. “I knew he was a strong puncher so I boxed for a little bit and then I saw the openings. A thunderous body shot in the fourth round dropped his opponent before Meza decided not come out of his corner.

It’s been his most impressive win to date but he realizes that soon it will be time to step up the competition. “I have some big fights coming up where I have to prove that I belong in the ring with the best in the world, said Gesta. “I’m excited but I know about being patient. I’m still young. The time to prove myself will come.

According to Parra, Gesta will be boxings next superstar. “He spars with some of the best in the sport and not only does he keep up with them, most of the times he gets the better of them, he said.

Gesta’s goals are typical of all ambitious fighters. “I want to be the best and I want the whole world to get to know me, said Gesta. “I want my performances to make everyone talk about what a great fighter I am. Winning a world title belt is very important to me. It would mean that I made a dream come true for my family and myself. I want to make them proud and I want to make Cebu and the Philippines proud too.

With his “No Mercy finishing skills, a little luck and the talent he’s demonstrated so far, it looks like Gesta’s dreams have a great shot at become reality.

Catch Mercito Gesta on Friday as he headlines on the Telefutura network as part of their Solo Boxeo series. The event will be promoted by Golden Boy Promotions and Don Chargin.

Video alert:

If you want to get to know Mercito Gesta a little better, follow the link to the video-interview I made of him. Watch it in High Definition on Youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TU6AcJijpME>

It’s also available on the front page of TSS.