

Cubanito Gonzalez Thinks, Hopes, That 33 Isn 't Too Old For Title Run

Written by Ralph Gonzalez

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Although 45 year old Bernard Hopkins may disagree, age is a factor in this sport. Boxing is meant for the very young but every once in a while an anomaly like Hopkins occurs.

Thirty three year old Lester "Cubanito Gonzalez is intent on beating the odds and making a world title run in the middleweight division. With only twelve fights under his belt, time is running out for the charismatic kid from playa del Este in Havana, Cuba where he was part of the highly regarded amateur boxing program. "I'm 33 but I feel stronger than any 18 year old, Gonzalez (11-0-1, 6 KOs) asserted during a local press conference to promote his upcoming fight against Chris Chatman. "I have all the skills to become a world champion. I don't have a single doubt in my mind.

With modern day gladiators like Hopkins competing at a high level beyond forty, who's to say that Gonzalez doesn't have a realistic shot at facing someone for a world title in the near future?

As Gonzalez's piercing blue eyes stared into Chatman's (8-1, 4 KOs) during the ceremonial stare-down held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in San Diego, Gonzalez didn't seem intimidated in the least. You could see it in his eyes. He's ready. It's all or nothing on Thursday November 18th.

He knows he can't afford a loss on his record if he's to make any headway towards his ultimate dream. "Every fight has a lot of meaning right now. I can't have any kind of setback like a 22 year old kid, stated Gonzalez. "I now Chatman is hungry like I'm hungry but that will be my night and the beginning of a great story

Manager Lou Messina is also concerned about the age factor but believes Gonzalez has the talent to overcome the issue. "He's older but he doesn't have a lot of pro fights so he's still pretty fresh. The age is a concern but I think Lester has a lot left in him, he said. "We plan on moving him at a good pace. Chatman is a tough test. If he passes, then we'll keep moving him along to harder fights.

Twenty six year old Chatman, whose only loss came at the hands of highly touted former Olympian Demetrius Andrade, is a southpaw intent on wrecking the Cuban's dreams. "I've been training so hard for this fight, said the U.S. Navy Veteran. "I've got my own goals to fulfill and I'm feeling extremely confident. I expect Lester to bring his best to the ring.

Chatman is no pushover. He was a navy champion and a Golden Glove titlist. He's currently trained by former world champion Manny Melchor at City boxing. He's coming off a fourth round TKO over the formerly undefeated prospect Albert Herrera. In Lester Gonzalez he faces a slick and accurate ring technician. "I know Lester's style very well and I'll have an answer for him, said Chatman. "I have a lot of respect for what he's done in the past but I'm putting it all on the line and God willing I'll come out ahead.

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Gonzalez started his boxing training at the age of thirteen with some of the top coaches in Cuba. He earned over a hundred amateur wins but stepped back from boxing until he got the chance to defect to the United States less than two years ago. He started training with Bob Clubb and then signed on with Messina and David Gutierrez who trains him in Miramar at The Black Tiger Gym.

“I wanted to come to the U.S. for the great opportunities available and when I had the chance to come here I took it, Gonzalez remembered. “I plan to make the most of any chance I get to make my life better and that’s what this fight means to me.

Chatman will only be the beginning of a tough road upwards for Gonzalez according to most conventional wisdom.

Can Lester Gonzalez with his highly regarded amateur pedigree and training beat the odds stacked against him? “I can do it. I just need the chance to prove it, Gonzalez stated. “My dreams are too big to be stopped. I’m a man on a mission to prove to the world how talented I am. Thursday night will be one of many more victories to come which will get me the world title shot I desperately want. I won’t disappoint.

Also on the Bobby D Presents and Jorge Marron card: Middleweights James “El Chocolate Parison (12-1, 3 KO’s) South San Diego, CA vs. Loren “Rock Myers (7-9-1, 2 KO’s) of Fresno, CA. □□ Featherweights Pablo “Bronco Armenta (3-0-1, 1 KO) South San Diego vs. Ronald “Mad Man Hurley (4-4-2, 0 KO’s) San Jacinto, CA □□ Lightweights Emmanuel Robles (1-0, 0 KO’s) San Diego, CA vs. TBA

Welterweights Ernesto Ocon (1-0, 0 KO’s) Los Angeles, CA. vs. TBA

The men will be fighting for the California Super Welterweight Title as part of the Coors Light Boxing Series main event on November 18th at the CROWNE PLAZA SAN DIEGO HANALEI IN MISSION VALLEY. For tickets: 619-420-8866 or 619-743-0698

Tickets start at \$25