When TSS met Karim Mayfield a few years back, he was an excited young fighter happy to get some recognition. Fresh off of a flight to England and back to help Ricky Hatton prepare for his bout against Floyd Mayweather, Mayfield was eager to hit the accelerator on his fight career.

But if there was ever a case of a near miss in boxing, this man caught it. In his first nationally televised fight, Mayfield took on fellow undefeated California fight Francisco Santana on Fox Sports Net in March of 2008. It was a heated six round bout that showcased two hungry warriors slugging it out. The bout took place in San Jose, California on the undercard of Andre Ward's fight against Rubin Williams.

Mayfield came through with a closely contested split decision. But he was not satisfied with his performance. Although he came out the victor, the Bay Area native felt the need to rededicate himself to the sport.

With a record of 11-0 and seven knockouts, Mayfield always knew that he had the talent to compete with the best, now, he says, he is backing it up with a tireless work ethic.

"I am taking it way more serious now. I will be fighting tougher opponents. Even though I have been fighting tough guys already, I have a new level of focus," Mayfield said. "I feel like a lot is riding on my shoulders. I feel the expectations. I fight for my family and my community. And I put my full effort into it. I am fighting for a lot."

Mayfield switched up his training regime. He wanted to work with the best. Before his rematch with Santana (which ironically took place on the undercard of Ward's fight against Kessler) Mayfield flew out to Big Bear to work with Shane Mosley.

The Southern California fighter, who is known for helping young fighters sharpen their game, was prepping for his bout with Andre Berto that got cancelled earlier this year.

Mayfield says that he gained a great amount of experience working with the future Hall of Fame inductee. "Just watching Shane, watching him train, and getting in the ring with him was a great time," Mayfield said. "We were working together to get ready for our fights."

Mayfield says that his trip to Big Bear helped him understand that he could be a champion in the near future.

"After my trip to Big Bear, I was a monster. That camp changed my outlook on the sport."

So with the credibility of his previous victory against Francisco Santana on the line, Mayfield thoroughly dominated his overmatched Santana in the November rematch, knocking him out in the fifth round.

Now the undefeated welterweight prospect is set to take on Mario Ramos this Friday in Reno, Nevada. And with a renewed focus, Mayfield foresees a bright future ahead.

Virgil Hunter, Mayfield's trainer, spoke about the ability of the young prospect.

"He does everything wrong, right," Hunter says about his young pupil. "You cannot teach what Karim brings into the ring. It is his instinctual ability that sets him apart. The kid just has the basic fighting instinct that cannot be taught, to me that is half the battle."

For this fight, Hunter sent Mayfield to Houston so he could work on his strength and conditioning with a coach named Andrew Jackson. Jackson has a strong reputation in boxing gyms throughout the country.

Mayfield says that his trip to Houston is helping his focus.

"I do strength and conditioning work and it gives me an edge," Mayfield said. "We spar at 9:30, and then run about three miles after we spar. Some days we go swimming in the afternoon. At night time around 7:30, we do strength and conditioning, which is more of the explosive work."

Virgil Hunter feels like Mayfield is about to explode onto the welterweight division.

The trainer says, "Karim is very unorthodox. He has tremendous power in both hands. He is a very uncanny fighter. He is going to be a problem for anybody he fights, and I am not just talking about where he is now, I am talking about the top ten."

"In one year, I would fight Karim for a title in 20 fights or less. I would say that Karim is probably the most dangerous fighter in the welterweight or junior welterweight division. All Karim has to do is maintain his physical condition."

But no matter what Hunter says, Karim Mayfield's future is in his own hands. And if he stays true to his word, the guy who grew up in Daly City, a ten minute drive outside of San Francisco, has no reason to slow down.

"I am just trying to be successful. It is not just about being successful in boxing. Some of the people that I grew up with are either dead, chillin' on the block doing nothing or they are in jail. So my goal is just to be successful in life.

"I have seen some bad things, and my community has seen some bad things, so I want to be a good example to them. I have a lot of youngsters looking up to me so I want to be a role model to show that you could make it."

On a side note, Mayfield would like to send his regards to Jackie Kallen. Mayfield and Kallen ended their professional relationship this past week making Mayfield a free agent.

"I am a free agent now without a promoter or manager. Jackie Kallen showed my family and I a great deal of support throughout the years. I will always take her advice with me as I move on in

the future. But as of right now I am working independently.”