

Melinda Cooper vs. Ada Velez Could Be Fight of the Year

Written by David A. Avila

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Undefeated Melinda “La Maravilla” Cooper and Ada “Ace” Velez meet to fight for the vacant IBF junior featherweight world title on Thursday. It could very well be the Fight of the Year.

The two former world champions are heading at full speed toward Costa Rica where they’ll determine who will be one of the heirs to the throne as the best super bantamweight female fighter today.

Will it be the youthful blockbusting power punching of Las Vegas’s Cooper (21-0, 11 KOs) or the slick counter punching experience of Puerto Rico’s Velez (18-3-3, 6 KOs) when they meet on the under card of Hanna Gabriel and Melisenda Perez’s junior middleweight title fight?

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"I'm ready to get it on," said southpaw Velez, adding that she had plenty of sparring. "I've practiced my speed and timing for Melinda. She's young and fast so that's two things I been practicing a lot with my boys."

Like Velez, Cooper also spars with male boxers when preparing for a fight.

"She hates sparring with girls," said James Pena who trains Cooper. "She says they're too easy."

Most experts in the female fight world are predicting a very competitive and explosive battle between the two.

Cooper has long been considered one of the best female fighters in the world but her talent has remained rather mysterious due to her lack of opponents in the past three years. Last minute cancellations are common for the speedy power puncher from the gambling Mecca of Las Vegas.

"Lot of people don't know that she has been boxing since she was 10," says Pena who has trained her since then. "Guys like Eddie Futch were always giving her tips and showing her what to do. How many people can say that?"

In this past year there have been three fights cancelled for Cooper. So back to the gym she goes honing her craft.

Now here comes Velez who has fought the top female fighters in her weight class for the past 11 years while picking up world titles in both the bantamweight and junior featherweight divisions.

"Power she has but I too have power," said Velez. "It's going to be the better skilled person in this fight and I know I've proven to lots of people around the world who is the best."

Cooper is simply anxious to return to the ring and fight for a world title again. It's been six years since she defeated Anissa Zamarron for the flyweight world title. Now she's ready to fight for the junior featherweight title.

"Every fight that I have had so far has been difficult in its own way. Each fighter has her own style, strengths, and drive," said Cooper whose last prize fight on U.S. soil was three years ago. "I'm really excited to be fighting for a world title again."

The Velez-Cooper showdown is beginning to warm up now. At first, many felt the match would evaporate like so many others that Cooper was scheduled to engage. But Velez is just as anxious to fight for the world title again.

"I will prove once again who is the best. Melinda Cooper, I give much respect, but neither coach or manager will be inside that ring," says Velez. "Get ready because here I come."

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The ever quiet spoken Cooper relishes the idea of fighting a world class fighter again like Velez. She also sees a clear path to her objectives:

“It's a goal of mine in boxing to win as many titles as possible and to continue making history,” she says.

It just might be the Fight of the Year.

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miguel1 says:

yeah wello the fight sucked, no power at all