

AVILA'S Female Boxing's Best Fighters Pound 4 Pound

Written by David A. Avila
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In just the past few months several big changes have taken place among the previous pound for pound fighters in the women's boxing world. Three new female boxers Ana Julaton, Jennifer Barber and Kaliesha West have cracked the top dozen. All three new additions fight out of California.

Because there are not as many female boxers as their male counterparts, the list rarely changes. So this season's changes are remarkable.

All of the top nine on this list from Layla McCarter to Jeanine Garside have remained on the list:

1. Layla McCarter (33-13-5, 7 KOs) – The Las Vegas-based McCarter was never a one-punch knockout artist nor a speedy mover who dances out of range. Instead the fighter known as “Amazing” fights in the pocket and uses a jab like Van Gogh used a paint brush. She has built an offensive and defensive arsenal that enables her to beat anyone. Most of her losses came early in her career when she simply walked into the boxing ring with no training. Over the years she's soaked up boxing knowledge learned in the ring against live competition. She's fought all over the world and racked up wins in other countries too. People forget that she is only 32.
2. Holly Holm (29-1-3, 9 KOs) – Tall, fast and nimble the New Mexico redhead has dominated boxing for the past few years in her native state. Holm has also gathered a large fan base especially in the Albuquerque area and is one of the very few American female boxers who commands a rather decent living as a prizefighter. She is proof that it can be done. Holm has beaten almost everyone from junior welterweight to middleweight except in Europe. Maybe one day she will fight McCarter. That would be a good fight.
3. Melissa Hernandez (14-2-3, 5 KOs) – The slick New York prizefighter is one of the more entertaining prizefighters in the sport today. And this includes male boxers as well. Despite a loss and draw to Lyndsay Garbatt, people forget that he is a featherweight willing to fight junior middleweights. Plus, she is good enough to beat girls much bigger than herself. The Boricua loves to fight and loves to talk. Hernandez also loves to give the crowd some entertainment too. One of her best encounters came against Chevelle Hallback that ended in a draw.
4. Ana Maria Torres (24-3-3, 14 KOs) – The Aztec Princess dominated the junior bantamweight division for years. Recently she moved up to junior featherweight and fought Jackie Nava to a draw. Torres is not very big but has plenty of fighting skills to match anyone.

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Her move into the heavier weight class could signal an all out Mexican war between that country's champions. Supposedly she is Mexico's best paid Mexican female boxer.

5. Melinda Cooper (21-1, 11 KOs) – Cooper is yet another Las Vegas prizefighter who has dominated over the years. She won a flyweight world title back in 2005 when she was only 19 years old. Recently she lost a very bad decision in Costa Rica to veteran Ada Velez but that's what happens when you fight in another country. Think Manny Pacquiao vs. Shane Mosley but the judges end up giving Mosley the decision. She dominated the fight, hurt her opponent and was never hurt herself. The Las Vegas speedster can crack and has proven to be one of the most exciting female boxers today. She is perhaps the most exciting female boxer today.

6. Susi Kentikian (28-0, 16 KOs) – The very popular flyweight has dominated her division and continues to draw fans whenever she fights in Germany. Too bad she doesn't travel outside of her home grounds. But who can blame her? She makes plenty of money whenever she fights and is televised often in Germany. She's very quick and knows how to make her fighting style work. Fans would love to see her fight fellow flyweight champion Mariana Juarez of Mexico.

7. Mariana Juarez (29-5-3, 13 KOs) – Mexican Barbue finally was given an opportunity to fight for the WBC flyweight title and beat Simona Galassi by decision. A week ago she defended that title with a knockout of Uruguay's Gabriela Bouvier. The Mexico City prizefighter is one of the more popular fighters in Mexico. Most of her fights are televised in Mexico and draw well. A return to the U.S. to showcase her skills would be a plus for her career. Juarez has been one of the top fighters for many years now.

8. Kina Malpartida (13-3, 3 KOs) – Peru's only world champion ever recently avenged a former loss to Rhonda Luna this past month by decision. Malpartida knows how to use her reach and height and has a string of victories to prove it. The junior lightweight could move up in weight if she chooses simply because of her height and reach. Most of her bouts take place in her native country Peru where she draws thousands of fans. She is so popular that parades greet her arrival.

9. Jeanine Garside (10-3-1, 4 KOs) – Once she was given another chance to fight for the world title she took full advantage of the opportunity. She prefers punching and more punching and relies a lot on her natural strength. Garside is one of those fighters that could move up in weight with little effort. She is new to this list.

10. Kaliesha West (13-1-2, 4 KOs) – West had been knocking on the door of a world title bid for a number of years. After fighting four consecutive bouts against world class competition she finally got her opportunity and captured the WBO bantamweight world title against fellow American Angel Gladney last September. Now she finally moved into the pound for pound list in recognition for that amazing run. She was also this writer's Fighter of the Year for taking those risks and coming out on top. West is only 23 and could be around for a long while. She has speed, power and continues to build her fighting skills.

11. Jennifer Barber (10-1, 4 KOs) – "The Razor" must have put a whipping on South Korea's Ji-Hye Woo to rip the junior lightweight world title away last December in that fighter's country.

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Barber is a tall, skilled boxer with movement and a great jab. For years she fought in the amateurs and has been fighting professionally four years now. It would be great to see her try and unify the division. There's lots of talent at the 130-pound weight class and Barber has the style to compete at any level.

12. Ana Julaton (8-2-1) – "The Hurricane" refuses to take tune up fights or bouts against sub par opponents. Instead the brunette scrapper from the San Francisco Bay area is willing to take risks and defend her title against the best in the world. Julaton's last loss came against former pound for pound fighter Lisa Brown who has since lost herself. Impressive and gutty wins against very tough girls like Maria Villalobos, Franchesca Alcanter and Donna Biggers show that she has not slowed. In the Philippines she is already the second most popular fighter behind Manny Pacquiao.

Honorable Mention:

Ina Menzer – Lost her title to Jeanine Garside but it doesn't mean she's done.

Lisa Brown – She lost by decision to Chanttel Martinez despite knocking the Panamanian down. Did she get a bad decision?

Jackie Nava – Fought fellow Mexican Ana Maria Torres to a draw. She's an aggressive fighter who takes chances.

Yesica Bopp – Argentina's newest star has beaten some pretty decent opposition in her young career. But fights mostly in Argentina. Her weight class has a lot of talent.

Ada Velez – Even at age 40 the Puerto Rican boxer is very competitive and has a great boxing IQ.

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Radam G says:

I can dig it! But I would put "Da Hurricane" Julaton and K "Wild, Wild" West much, much higher. They are the special lights of lady kick-arse. Look out for 'em in the coming few years. Bitin' on da spit of da Don, "You heard it here, first." Holla!

the Roast says:

I dont know a damn thing about any of these ladies but Pete Egley Jr does. Oh where oh where has the Eggman gone? Oh where oh where can he be?