

Kaliesha West Ready To Defend World Title In Mexico...Avila

Written by David A. Avila
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Few know that Kaliesha “Wild Wild” West is part Mexican and that fighting in Mexico is all part of her big plan to showcase her abilities to brawl, box or bludgeon opponents into submission.

Even less know that her best weapon is speed and that maybe only two other girls in the bantamweight division or higher can equal it. Its one of the reasons she’s considered one of the best female fighters pound for pound.

West (13-1-3, 4 KOs) takes her flashing fists to Manzanillo, Mexico in the state of Colima to expose those skills against Jessica Villafranca (12-2, 6 KOs) on Saturday Aug. 20. It’s her first fight under her new promoter HB Boxing of Mexico.

For the second time in a year West defends the WBO bantamweight world title and for the second time she fights in Mexico against a national Mexican fighter. The last time occurred three years ago in a blowout win for West.

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"I feel nervous but at the same time thankful. I understand that boxing in Mexico is huge, they have very tough love for the sport, but at the same time, they support the sport to the fullest," said West, 23. "I'm just planning on going out there, and doing my job to the best of my abilities, and perform for one of boxing's biggest fan bases."

Though West speaks just a little Spanish she's very familiar with the Mexican style of fighting and plans to be ready for Villafranca's arsenal.

"I know a little bit about her. I know about her amateur background, she is usually heavier than me and I know she is bigger than me. When she fought other women that weren't on her level of competition, she did what she had to do and either knocked them out, or won by decision," said West who is trained by her father Juan West. "I treat every fight the same, I just listen to my dad, and do what I was trained to do. Every fight has its dangers in its own way, but as long as I do what I'm told, I'll be fine."

Villafranca is filling in for Argentina's Yanina Acuna who suffered an injury while training. The new opponent is taller and younger and is fighting in front of her own countrymen. It's always tough convincing judges when every blow thrown by a Mexican fighter will be cheered and every blow thrown by West will result in silence.

But her experience in Mexico in 2008 prepared her.

"I'm excited about giving that boxing crowd what they want, action and entertainment in the ring," West says about fighting for Mexican fans. "I'm focused on letting all who watch, tune in, and seats themselves live in Mexico, know that I'm one of boxing's greatest fighters."

Former world champions like Wendy Rodriguez know how dangerous and potent Moreno Valley's West can truly be.

"Her speed is what makes her dangerous," said Rodriguez who sparred with West in the past.

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“She knows what she’s looking for when fighting someone.”

Will Mexican fans realize what they’re looking at when she fights in Manzanillo on Saturday?

“I see it as a blessing. I’m not going to Mexico fearing that because I was born in Michigan I’m going to be rejected,” said West who moved to California at a young age. “I’m going to Mexico as a fighter, and if they judge me based on how great I fight, not where I was born, everything will fall into place.”

Same fight card

Also on the same fight card in Mexico, IBF flyweight titleholder Arely Mucino (13-0-1, 8 KOs) defends against Susana Vasquez (5-5-1) in a 10-round title fight.

Fights on television

Fri. ESPN2, 6 p.m., Demetrius Andrade (13-0) vs. Grady Brewer (28-12).

Sat. Fox, 6 p.m., Fernando Montiel (45-3-2) vs. Alvaro Perez (21-3-1).

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Radam G says:

K "Wild, Wild" West all DAY! She is da Lady BOSS, and all arses she will FLOSS. They ain't got a chance. She is simply marvelous and all that and a bag of chips. Holla!