

Busy Fight Schedule Begins For UFC, Golden Boy & Top Rank

Written by David A. Avila

Wednesday, 16 May 2012 18:55



Peterson and Khan were set to renew hostilities on Saturday, but a failed Peterson drug test messed up that plan. Still, we have some solid scraps to look forward to.

Amir “King” Khan and Lamont “Havoc” Peterson were supposed to resume their clash this Saturday in Las Vegas. It would have been a very interesting rematch.

As most fans know Peterson failed a random drug test that he had asked for as a requirement to make the fight. What irony.

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Still there are many fights rumbling forward for the next two months including a blockbuster mixed martial arts card that was almost upended for yet another drug test failure.

Ultimate Fighting Championship 146 begins the fight factory assembly line on May 26 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. Five heavyweight bouts will highlight the fight card including UFC heavyweight champion Junior Dos Santos defending against Frank Mir.

Alistair Overeem was scheduled to challenge Brazil's hard-hitting heavyweight but the British prizefighter failed the drug test. Mir replaces him.

"Apparently he (Overeem) got suspended for nine months. He got caught for taking anti-inflammatory drugs. It was pretty simple the rules are cut and clear," said Dana White, president of UFC while in West Hollywood. "He's going to have to do a suspension and they are going to test him. He probably thought they were testing him a lot now, it's going to be worse. I'm just pissed off."

White is miffed because of the significant loss of money toward marketing the event. Golden Boy Promotions also suffered the same fate in the cancellation of the Khan-Peterson card.

"It's a huge pain in the (butt)," says White.

Though it was a loss of revenue the real star of the card is the Brazilian slugger Dos Santos. UFC 146 will proceed along with fellow heavyweights Cain Velasquez facing Antonio "Big Foot" Silva; Roy Nelson against Dave Herman; Mark Hunt clashing with Stefan Struve; and Stipe Miocic targeting Shane del Rosario. Plus, there will be several other bouts. The heavyweight showdowns will be televised on pay-per-view.

Golden Boy

Three boxing cards connected to Southern California's Golden Boy Promotions take place

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simultaneously on June 2.

Forst, there's IBO cruiserweight titleholder Antonio Tarver (29-6, 20 KOs) defending against undefeated Lateef Kayode (18-0, 14 KOs) at the Home Depot Center in Carson. On the same venue WBA junior middleweight titleholder Austin Trout (24-0, 14 KOs) defends against Delvin Rodriguez (26-5-3, 14 KOs); and East L.A.'s Leo Santa Cruz (19-0-1, 11 KOs) meets Vusi Malinga (20-3-1, 12 KOs) for the vacant IBF bantamweight world title.

On the same day in Indio, Andrew Cancio (13-1-2, 11 KOs) of Blythe faces former world title challenger Rocky Juarez (28-9-1) in the main event. Though Juarez has lost five consecutive bouts all came against top contenders and the Houston native was never hurt in any of those fights. It should be a tough match up.

Finally, in Las Vegas, Golden Boy and Don Chargin Productions have a world title match at the Hard Rock Hotel where WBA and IBA light heavyweight titleholder Beibut Shumenov (12-1, 8 KOs) defends against La Habra's Enrique Ornelas (33-7, 21 KOs).

Speaking of Golden Boy, the pilot for the promotion company says that fans can expect some riveting match ups in the end of summer, especially in the welterweight and junior middleweight divisions.

Canelo, Kirkland and Malignaggi

"There is a lot of talent in the 147-154 weight class. We're very strong and have almost everyone with the exception of Manny Pacquiao," said Richard Schaefer, Golden Boy CEO. "We're going to sit down with Team Canelo and it's going to be a Sept. 15 pay-per-view. It's going to be his first pay-per-view event. One of the options is we want to put together fireworks. The one fight we're looking at is a showdown with James Kirkland. That would be another explosive fight."

Schaefer also lauded new WBA welterweight titleholder Paul "Magic Man" Malignaggi's victory to grab the title a few weeks ago. The Brooklyn prizefighter now adds his name to the number of

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elite welterweights ready to tangle.

“A lot of people didn’t give him much of a chance. Not too many fighters are coming home with the belt over there. It’s one of those instances where you saw such a large discrepancy in skills. As Floyd (Mayweather) says, ‘skills pays the bills.’ With his speed and surprising power he was able to cut up the champion and win by TKO. It’s a great career win for him and it fits beautifully him being from Brooklyn, New York. On Oct. 20 the Barkley Center opens up... That’s what we’re discussing with Malignaggi.”

Top Rank

The Las Vegas-based Top Rank Promotions brings former middleweight world champion Kelly Pavlik (38-2, 33 KOs) to face Scot Sigmon (22-3, 12 KOs) at the Hard Rock Hotel on June 8. Also, Riverside’s Saul “Dinamita” Rodriguez (4-0, 4 KOs) fights Arizona’s Cesar Valenzuela (2-1-1) in a junior lightweight fight.

The following day Palm Spring’s undefeated Timothy “Desert Storm” Bradley (28-0, 12 KOs) faces super star Manny “Pacman” Pacquiao (54-3-2, 38 KOs) for the WBO welterweight world title. Their huge fight takes place at the MGM Grand and will be shown on HBO pay-per-view. Also, WBA junior featherweight titleholder Guillermo Rigondeaux (9-0, 7 KOs) fights Teon Kennedy (17-1-2, 7 KOs) and undefeated Mike Jones (26-0, 19 KOs) meets Randall Bailey (42-7, 36 KOs) for the vacant IBF welterweight title.

It’s another mega card weekend that takes place in Las Vegas.

Fights on television

Fri. ESPN2, 6 p.m., Karim Mayfield (15-0-1) vs. Raymond Serrano (18-0).

Sat. Telefutera, 11 p.m., Odlanier Solis (17-1) vs. Konstantin Airich (23-5-2).

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