

Josesito Lopez & Chris Arreola Both Eager To Fight At Staples Center

Written by David A. Avila
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Who's going to fight a monster like Victor Ortiz on short notice?

One phone call later Golden Boy Promotions got their answer: Riverside's Josesito Lopez will take that fight.

The lanky junior welterweight Lopez (29-4, 17 KOs) moves up to welterweight to challenge former world champion Victor "Vicious" Ortiz (29-3-2, 22 KOs) on Saturday June 23, at the Staples Center. He's bringing along his big buddy Chris "The Nightmare" Arreola too.

One moment you're down, the next moment you're up. That's the life of a prizefighter. Lopez recently heard that his scheduled fight with former junior welterweight world champ Kendall Holt had been canceled. A few days later he gets a call asking if he would take a fight with Ventura's left-handed bomber Ortiz.

"First I was thinking it sucks. The whole point was I wanted to fight Kendall Holt to show what I can do," said Lopez. "He signed the contract and there were a couple of excuses and he backed out. But that was a blessing in disguise so I can't complain now."

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On Monday the Riverside team discovered that not only was Lopez fighting at the Staples Arena, but his stable mate Arreola was invited too.

“Holt caused a bad situation to rise and we were fortunate to rebound from it. At least Josesito was able to rebound from it,” said Dan Goossen who co-promotes Lopez along with Thompson Boxing Promotions.

Lopez fills in for Andre Berto who tested positive for performance enhancement drugs last week. It was the second time a Berto rematch with Ortiz was canceled.

“The fight with Ortiz was brought up to me originally on Thursday, or so. I always thought I would one day be fighting him,” said Lopez, 27, whose scuttled fight with Holt was supposed to be at 140 pound junior welterweight division. “I did plan on moving up to 147 some time in the future but I guess it’s now.”

Trainer Henry Ramirez knows that it’s going to be a little tricky but relishes both of his fighter’s opportunities.

“This changes our approach drastically. He’s going to have to be in shape whether it’s Victor Ortiz or Kendall Holt. We’re in that process now,” said Ramirez who also manages Lopez. “Maybe Victor is a little bit bigger. But the fight with Holt was just an eliminator. The fight with Ortiz is a main event at the Staples Center. It’s a big fight.”

Arreola

A special addition to the card will be heavyweight contender Arreola. The last time the Riverside slugger fought in that arena he lost a chance to grab the world title from Vitali Klitschko in 2009. He plans a different ending.

“It’s an honor to fight at Staples again. It’s a beautiful arena and of course it’s like my home. I

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was born and raised in LA, that's my backyard, I go to LA as much as I can," says Arreola (35-2, 30 KOs). "The last time I was there it didn't go well. I am going to redeem myself."

A suitable opponent for Arreola is being sought. Though he has been promised a shot at world champion Wladimir Klitschko in November or December, the Riverside prizefighter refuses to play it safe and wait for the Klitschko fight.

"No reason to wait. I hate waiting. Just keep me busy. I just want to keep my business in the gym," Arreola, 31, said. "That's the main thing. All I have to do is keep winning. And not by decisions. I hate decisions. I like to give the fans what they want and that's a knockout."

Lopez and Arreola are excited to bring their brand of fighting to Los Angeles.

"If the Lakers don't pull it off then maybe we can bring them something to cheer about," says Arreola.

Lopez agrees.

"Riverside fans always come and support us," said Lopez, adding that though he will be making 10 times more money than if he fought Holt, it's not about the money.

"It's about the exposure," Lopez says. "I'm going to the Staples Center to win."

Two Goossen Cards on same day

Ironically, Goossen-Tutor Promotions has another loaded fight card on the same day and almost the same time 15 miles away in nearby Studio City, Calif. at the Sportsmans Lodge. Former world champion Rico Ramos (20-1, 11 KOs) is set to meet Colombia's Jhonathan

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Romero (21-0, 12 KOs), who recently fought in Ontario.

“I’m going to be there live at the (Sportsmans) lodge show and head down to Staples and catch Josesito’s fight,” said Goossen. “Maybe I can borrow a helicopter.”