

Bantams On Friday ShoBox

Written by The Sweet Science
Wednesday, 19 September 2012 16:03

NEW YORK (Sept. 19, 2012) – Four promising, talented super bantamweights with a combined record of 62-1-1 will share the spotlight in important fights this **Friday, Sept. 21**, on **Sh**

oBox: The New Generation

live on

SHOWTIME®

(11 p.m. ET/PT, delayed on the West Coast) from

Chumash Casino Resort

in

Santa Ynez

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Calif

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One of the three unbeatens on the telecast, Colombia's world-ranked **Jonathan Romero** (21-0, 12 KOs) will seek his 22nd

consecutive victory when he meets

Efrain Esquivias Jr.

(16-1, 9 KOs), of Gardena, Calif., for the No. 2 ranking in the IBF and the WBC Latino championship in the 10-round main event.

The opening bout of the telecast will match **Roman Morales** (12-0, 6 KOs), of San Ardo, Calif., and **Jonathan Arellano** (13-0-1, 3 KOs), of Ontario, Calif., in an eight-round match.

ShoBox expert analyst and boxing historian **Steve Farhood** weighed-in on the event:

"This is a classic *ShoBox* card with two good matchups featuring fighters in the same division,"
"The 122-pound division is very strong overall, and it is also a very strong division for young prospects. Let's see where these guys fit in.

"Romero scored an upset win over **Chris Avalos** last December on *ShoBox* and will be looking to continue to build off that. Romero is a boxer-puncher so it'll be interesting to see how he does

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against Esquivias, who'll be in his face all night.

"Morales is back on *ShoBox* after an impressive debut in July. He was a good amateur and seems to be progressing as a pro, but he's matched against a very good boxer who's also undefeated."

Tickets for the **Gary Shaw Productions** event, priced at **\$35, \$45, \$55, \$70** and **\$85**, are on sale and can be purchased at Chumash Resort Casino Box office or online at www.startickets.com

The 5-foot-9, 25-year-old Romero is making his third start in a row in the United States, and fourth overall. In 2008, he won the Colombian National Amateur Championship at 119 pounds and represented his country in the Olympics. He turned pro in May 2009.

In an action packed slugfest two outings ago, he rebounded from an opening-round knockdown to win a questionable 10-round split decision over former contender, Avalos, last Dec. 2 on *Sho Box* at Chumash. He got a narrow decision by the scores of 96-93, 95-94 and 94-95.

Romero earned a lopsided eight-round decision over **Adolfo Landeros** in his most recent effort, this past May 11, where he fractured his left thumb. This is the first fight back for a solid up-and-comer ranked No. 5 in the IBF and WBO and No. 9 in the WBA.

Romero is expecting a rough go Friday. "I've seen Esquivias fight," he said. "He's a tough guy who's going to be right in front of you, putting pressure on you. That's what we're preparing for, and we're going to be ready for it. I'm going to have the same approach I had against Avalos. I'm going to box, not stand right in front of him. If we have to adjust, we'll adjust."

Regarding the spelling of his first name, he said, "My name is spelled j-o-n-a-t-h-a-n."

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Esquivias, who is ranked 12th in the IBF, has also fought Landeros and Ramos. Like Romero, he won an eight-round decision over Landeros. But unlike Romero, he came up on the wrong end of a close decision to Ramos, losing a split 10-round nod in a spirited and competitive affair on June 23, 2012.

He'll be looking to rebound in this one. "I'm aggressive but at the same time, smart," the 5-foot-4, 29-year-old, five-year-pro said. "I'm a boxer-puncher. I can switch up. I can box, I can brawl. It depends on the opponent. I like to keep a hard pace, though, and entertain the fans. We know this is a tough fight, but this is a fight that can get me a world ranking and back in contention."

The ambidextrous Esquivias gets great sparring; he's been in camps with WBC champs **Abner Mares** (Super Bantamweight) and **Ponce De Leon** (Featherweight), and former two-division world titleholder **Jorge Linares**.

After a mediocre amateur career, Esquivias went pro in September 2007. Although being at a height disadvantage in the division, he has stayed active and continues to make good progress despite the close loss to Ramos.

"I've had a little over 100 amateur fights," Esquivias said. "I started off pretty bad and didn't have many wins. But I took every fight as a learning experience, and I fought the best. I knew I could do better. I never gave up, and I kept learning something new off every loss. I won the National Golden Gloves in 2006 and I went pro, and I said, 'I'll never lose again.'

"As of right now, I'm fully focused on fighting full-time. I was going to college, but I couldn't concentrate after I lost my father. All I was thinking about was making a promise that I made to him come true: to be a world champ. That's all that was on my mind, to train and make it happen. So I dedicated myself full-time to boxing. I've got a lot of weight to carry, and I'm working hard to make this dream come true."

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The aggressive, switch-hitting Morales is making his second start on *ShoBox* at Chumash and seventh overall at Chumash since he went pro in February 2011. The good-looking youngster is fighting for the fifth time this year after fighting eight times in 2011.

Morales showed promise in his *ShoBox* debut, winning a crowd-pleasing, hard-fought but dominant eight-round decision over the

Roger

Mayweather

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ained

Alexis Santiago

last July 20. Going eight rounds for the first time, Morales registered a knockdown in the third and combined a steady body attack with a big edge in power punching to outpoint Santiago by 80-71 on the three judges' scorecards.

"I've been training really hard for this fight," said the 5-foot-7, 23-year-old Morales, a former amateur standout and 2010 U.S. National Champion at 119 pounds who is coming off an eight-round unanimous decision victory over **Jonathan Alcantara** on Aug 24.

"I just had a fight about two weeks ago and took maybe three or four days off. I still train at the San Ardo Boxing Gym at home, but I also trained in San Carlos, Calif. I was there sparring with **Nonito Donaire**

. There are a couple local fighters in the Fresno area but mostly I travel. I go to Oxnard and Maywood (both destinations, one way, are several hours away).'

Morales is familiar with Arellano. "I know he's kind of slick and moves around," he said. "He's a boxer – hit and move. I plan is to push ahead and put the pressure on him. I like to use good power and speed and move a lot. I keep my hands up and move forward – nothing sloppy."

Arellano is trained by **Henry Ramirez** with an assist from **Danny Zamora**. A stablemate of **Josesito Lopez**

and

Chris Arreola

, he's won nine in a row since a four-round draw in March 2010, and is coming off an eight-round unanimous decision over

Jose Beranza

last June 22.

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"I've had a good eight weeks to prepare," he said. "I took a couple of weeks off after my last fight and just relaxed. I took some time off for my birthday, so I was able to enjoy that. It was the first time I wasn't in training camp or preparing for a fight in a long time. I got back in the gym, and that's when I found out we were on SHOWTIME."

Regarding his style and goals, the 5-foot-6, 25-year-old Arellano said, "I'm more of a boxer-puncher. I've definitely gotten much smarter, just through experience in the ring. I'm being more calm and collected instead of being ruthless and reckless. In boxing, everyone has a reason why they do the sport. Growing up as an amateur, it's fun. You have dreams and goals. But being a pro is a little different. I feel I'm fighting for completely different reasons now. I feel I'm not fighting just for myself. As much as those dreams and goals are still intact, now I'm fighting for my family. It's more serious.

"At times when I'm in the ring, I feel like I have a complete advantage, I feel I fight for different reasons. If I'm in the ring and the guy is fighting for the same reason I am – he has a family and kids -- the fights become brutal. Those are the fights that are tougher. I'm going to go in there on Friday and give it all I've got."

This will be the toughest test for a slick boxer-puncher with good movement who has fought just 25 amateur fights.

Barry Tompkins will call the action from ringside with Farhood as analyst. The executive producer is **Gordon Hall** with **Richard Gaughan** producing and **Rick Phillips** directing.

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