

Danny Garcia-Erik Morales Fight Is On

Written by Michael Woods
Friday, 19 October 2012 15:18



Morales, in his birthday suit, was 139.2, and Garcia weighed 139.8 on Friday. Oscar pulled Morales away and Bernard Hopkins yanked Garcia away during a heated staredown.

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It looks as of right now that the Danny Garcia-Erik Morales fight is a go for Saturday night at the Barclays Center. That proposition seemed murky when news broke late yesterday afternoon-early evening that Morales, the 36 year-old living legend, tested positive for a banned substance from a test conducted by the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA).

Golden Boy Promotions' CEO Richard Schaefer said that the banned substance was clenbuterol, which is used to aid asthmatics, but also can be used, off label, to aid in weigh loss. Fight fans know that Morales didn't make weight for his first fight against Garcia, and chose to relinquish a title he held rather than try to cut down from 142 pounds to make 140.

At the weigh-in for the Barclays card held Friday at the arena, Schaefer said that USADA tested a Morales sample on October third, to his knowledge, and that the "A" sample from that processing showed the presence of clenbuterol. "There were very, very small traces of that substance," he said he was told, which he thinks are consistent with cases of food contamination. "Clenbuterol is sometimes used to bulk up cattle in Mexico and China," Schaefer continued. "But let's let the process play out. We in boxing, the fans, promoters, boxers, we really don't know so let's let the experts do their jobs." Schaefer said that results from a "B" sample, from that Oct. 3 collection session, will be made available later today, in order to insure that the initial positive wasn't a false positive. "I believe in innocent until proven guilty," he said. "We will not throw Erik Morales under the bus."

The promoter said USADA will give their recommendation to the NY State Athletic Commission, which is overseeing the Barclays card, and then it will be up to the NYSAC to rule on whether the fight can go forward.

Schaefer said Golden Boy was informed of the sample positive Tuesday, late, and that on Wednesday morning, Team Morales and the commission were told. When asked if he had a backup plan, if Morales were forbidden to fight, Schaefer said he was "not going to speculate."

Then, after that interview, I spoke to Danny Garcia's dad, Angel, who also trains the Philly boxer. He said that additional collections were done on Oct. 10 and also on Wednesday, and he expected to hear results from those tests "today or tonight." And if either of those tests show the presence of a banned substance, will the fight go on? "The fight is over," the father told me. "I love Danny too much...And Danny agrees." Money, he said, was not more important than his

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son's well being.

I asked the New York State Athletic Commission for a statement, for clarification, but a spokesman said the NYSAC had no comment. He said a statement might be forthcoming later tonight.

After Morales made weight, and after Garcia got in his face and yelled at him during the staredown, the Mexican vet sucked down a drink happily. His team looked elated, and there didn't seem to be any clouds of the unknown hanging over them. Team Morales' Ben Mora told me he was certain the fight would go on. And how was he so sure? Because, he told me, Team Morales received results of samples taken on Oct. 10 and Oct. 17, and he said they were "negative." He said Team Morales got those results on Thursday.

Mora said that he thinks Morales did indeed eat meat from cattle which had been given clenbuterol, while he was in Mexico, in "a little community."

Tour de France ace Alberto Contador argued that he ate tainted meat when he tested positive for clenbuterol in 2010. From a Sept. 30, 2010 NY Times article: "The use of clenbuterol to bulk up cattle is far less common than it was a decade or two ago, Fernando Ramos of the University of Coimbra in Portugal, who studies the use of clenbuterol, told The New York Times. Most contamination cases in humans involved eating liver, where the drug is known to accumulate."

So there we are, another episode of the Theater of the Unexpected. Which maybe in regard to this situation, should be called Theater of the Expected.

Positive tests, and talk of A and B samples, and VADA and USADA, and the like are occurring too often to be termed "unexpected." If I had to guess, the old showbiz adage "the show must go on" will apply.

I can see the NYSAC saying that they do testing of all the athletes, and do two tests in championship fights, and respectfully dismissing test results from an outside entity.

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