Written by David A. Avila
Friday, 23 November 2012 22:47

ONTARIO, CALIF.-Face to face you would never know that Robert “The Ghost” Guerrero was a 126-pound world champion. Or that Andre Berto dominated welterweights until toppling one time a few years back.

Guerrero (30-1-1, 18 KOs) meets Berto (28-1, 22 KOs) in a battle between two incredibly athletic prizefighters for the interim WBC welterweight title on Saturday, Nov. 24. Golden Boy

Promotions stages the fight at the Citizens Business Bank Arena. HBO will televise on delay in the West Coast.

As Berto stepped on the scale the amiable boxer from Florida looked anxious to step into the ring and perhaps erase those demons of doubt stemming from a failed drug test, loss to Victor Ortiz and the months of possible ring rust.

Guerrero looked anxious to prove that he can indeed fight anyone at 147 pounds and has that eagerness that comes with knowing he faced a hard hitter and survived.

Now the two are set to finally meet. The winner will probably get that nod to fight Floyd Mayweather next.

Just four years ago Guerrero was a lanky southpaw boxer-puncher who took out Jason Litzau with a swift left uppercut in the eight round. Yes, he has power. But few realize how athletic the Gilroy prizefighter really is.

Two years ago while visiting him in Big Bear Lake we saw Guerrero at Abel Sanchez’s boxing gym. As we talked Sanchez was talking about the Ghost’s leaping ability. He asked Guerrero to show us.

Standing outside of the boxing ring - that had a foot high platform - without a running start Guerrero leaped over the four ring ropes in a single bound without use of his hands. It was a jump that would make L.A. Clipper Blake Griffin do a double take. We couldn’t believe it. We had a video camera with us but were caught by surprise. Guerrero offered to repeat it but I said no. I didn’t want to be responsible for an accident should he not be successful again.

“My first year in football I was a second string quarterback. I couldn’t throw a pass so I ran it. I had three touchdowns,” said Guerrero, who attended Gilroy High.

Guerrero is a wiry strong, quick fisted and sleek footed boxer whose knockouts have kind of blinded the fans into thinking he’s one dimensional. Far from it.

“I can’t wait to get out there; I’m just chomping at the bit. All that’s left is to just go in there and fight,” Guerrero said.

Berto reminds many of Sugar Shane Mosley who despite a lack of height used his speed and power to blinding effectiveness. A few months back I saw Berto doing some drills in a Van Nuys boxing gym and the Floridian looked fluid and quick.

He’s the only fighter that ever dominated Steve Forbes, who fought a ton of fighters from Oscar De La Hoya to Cornelius Bundrage. But when they met on September 2008, Berto dominated.

Now Berto faces someone who is similar in athleticism but he feels he still has advantages.

“My advantage is definitely my speed and a power advantage,” says Berto. “Robert is a tough fighter. He’s a crafty southpaw. We’re just going to be ready for whatever.”

Berto weighed 146.8 pounds and Guerrero 146.4 pounds at the official weigh in that took place at Dave & Busters in the Ontario Mills Mall on Friday afternoon.

Odds and Ends

New WBC lightweight champion Adrien “The Problem” Broner showed up at the weigh in and when asked who would be his dream fight he answer: “Adrien Broner. I’d kick his ass.”

A number of boxing journalists met at the Club Hi Brow sports bar in Upland, California. The establishment is owned by the wife of one of the premiere sportswriters in Southern California.

It’s located on 925 W. Foothill Blvd.

Tattoo emceed the boxing proceedings at the Golden Boy Promotions weigh in. The KDAY radio disc jock has one of the most popular Hip Hop shows in Southern California. He always adds something special to the boxing events.

Tickets are priced at $200, $100, $75, $50 and $25, plus applicable service charges and taxes, are available for purchase by calling Ticketmaster at (800) 736-1420 or by calling AXS at (888) 9AXS- TIX (888-929-7849), at the Citizens Business Bank Arena box office or online at www.ticketmaster.com, www.cbbankarena.com or www.axs.com.

Comment on this article

vinnieq says:

i got 25/1 odds on a draw...
it seems what one brings in athleticism and craft, the other matches with power and aggression.. The BLH staff picks had it 4-3 Berto. And i'm favouring Guerrero just because of intelligence and chin.

But i have a sneaking suspicion the judges will cower away from acknowledging Guerrero's technical superiority and split it even based on Berto bringing a strong fight to the ring tonight.

25/1 Draw tonight.. Fiver down. One hundred and twenty five back!

Spinach Chin says:

Never seen Robert hurt or dropped....Berto's explosive but was lucky to get the W against unknown Zaveck. Going with the tortoise to beat the hare by decision.

ali says:

The ghost is about to get scraped. Berto does slot of dumb **** in the ring but I think his speed and power will make up for it.

brownsugar says:

Robert is always the better technician and has be considered the smarter and more skilled boxer. He can box from the outside or he can grab, punch and clinch (in that order) as he proved against Selcuk. Yordan is the only boxer I've seen who was able to penetrated his aura

of invicibility.... but we do know that Guerrero was under duress at the time about his wifes condition and ultimately the fight was stopped early on cuts.. Yordan hasn't made much of a name for himself since.

It'll be interesting to see how Berto,.... whose been mocked, villified, and persecuted by the fans and the press alike will respond after being dropped from the Berter vs Ortiz2 card and left to languish in inactivity as he pondered his involvment with PED's will be able to rebound tonight.

If being broke,....starving for attention, retribution and restoration isn't enough motivation... I don't know what is....

In Berto's last fight,..... fans remember Zan Javek getting up in his grille early until a relentless assault from Berto was able to lacerate Javek's face as Berto began landing bombs of desperation on Javeks mug in the middle rounds. If Javek hadn't been dismissed for cuts, it's possible he would have gotten Berto out of there because the Hiatian bomber was totally spent after his risky gamble..

I normally grow a 3rd eye in my forehead for most bouts and can see eventualities and outcomes before they happen...(at least 75% of the time). But this time the view from my 3rd eye has been obfuscated, because of a variety of diverse factors.

How good is Guerrero? Will the "Christian factor" have any effect on the outcome?

How much will Berto's strength and size advantage be a factor after being inactive for so long.

Will Guerrero's move up to 147 allow him to be more comfortable in the late rounds since he didn't have to focus on cutting weight.

Will Berto be single mindedly possessed and determined to give the best performace of a lifetime due to the recent PED scandal

November has been a great month for fights. and has given me much to be thankful for.
I'm looking forward to this fight like it's a discount version of Pac vs Mayweather. it's an unpredictable encounter full of potential drama. The kind of fight I savor...

Voting with my head I can see Guerrero being too strategically sound for Berto and eaking out a UD or Split Decision. (maybe even a KO if Berto isn't 100% tip top)

Voting with my heart I can see Berto clawing desperately to upright his reputation and silence the critics.
Either way..... I will enjoy the out-come.
The icing on cake will be Keith "One Time" Thurman facing Carlos (The Jackal) Quintana , will the young Pup upset the wiley veteran?... or is he just another jumped up underqualified rookie thrown into the big-time too quickly?

Bernie Campbell says:

Joe Watson and his 2 sons got to stop stealing the limelight! Get this joker off the TV screen!

Radam G says:

Danggit , BerCamp, you really don't dig Sam and his sons. Haha! That always-in-the-ring Sam ain't Uncle Sam or piano-playing Sam in the old flick "Casablanca." Holla!

the Roast says:

Great fight tonight. That was rugged for sure. The ref could have done a better job breaking them and controling the action. Floyd will toy with Guerrero if it happens.

brownsugar says:

Whoo Wee..... awsome.

Shoulder Roll Defense says:

Well, I just finished eating my crow sandwich. Guerrero suprised me with how strong and durable he is; he has quite a chin. He turned the boxing match into a "street fight" and Berto couldn't adjust. Why did Berto try to use the "Philly Shell" style of defense? The "Philly Shell" isn't a defense that you can just learn and implement at the last minute, it takes years to perfect it. Berto should have used the traditional orthodox high guard stance that he usually uses. Also, Berto's poor footwork hasn't improved, he didn't know how to weave and spin Guerrero, thus he allowed himself to be pinned on the ropes. Berto makes exciting fights, but almost a "shot" fighter because of his defensive deficiencies. I don't see him beating any of the elite welterweights, with the exception of maybe Paulie Malinaggi.

brownsugar says:

Berto is another in a long line of boxers who don't have a clue of how to position their bodies for maximum leverage inside. (like
Thomas Dulermo, Karim Mayfield, Seth mitchell Tony Demarco..... list goes on)

Berto consistantly gave away all his leverage each time he allowed Guerrero to casually bull him to the ropes and put an Andre Ward style beating on him when he closed the distance.

Berto spent too much precious time with his weight resting on his heals and his butt sitting on the ropes...

Thankfull he adapted slightly when he learned he could land the uppercut.

Honestly,... I couldn't believe Berto had no legs to sides step... no wheels to motor around laterally and keep the fight in the middle. (as one dimensional as Demarco vs Broner)

Speaking of Broner... Don't copy a fighter if you don't know what to do when the fight shifts inside....

Guerrero proved he's strong,.. smart and mean when he has to be... some of these Christian dudes are gonna give the faith a bad name with their ruthless tactics. LOL.

I said this was gonna be a good fight ... with RG being the smarter technician...
and although the fight didn't seen technical... it was in fact a technical marvel the way RG set the tone and dictated the terms of engagement against a fighter with inferior mobility and an even worse sense of inside-fighting-geometry...

Theres a certain way a fighter has to set his feet and position his body inside and... a certain way to grab...

Guerrero has won me over with his ruthless display of determination and ring generalship... he'll be a handful for anybody at 147 due to his strength and boxing skills .... Sorry.....but yes this does include Floyd and Pac.

Berto's heart should no longer be questioned...at least he redeemed himself on that level..... but like Ali said, his trainers have much to answer for... it's a disgrace not to have taught a world class boxer like Berto how to fight inside... and how to ride a bicycle.

I Applaud both boxers for giving their best and producing a very entertaining fight. But a rematch is not necessary at this time. I think RG vs Tim Bradley should be made... both guys are the same size... both are mobile and know how to use the ring... Somebody please tell Bradley that Pac doesn't want a rematch, the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow has vanished..... so come out from semi retirement and get this fight made... it would be a beautiful tactical struggle and set the winner up for the brawl for it all.

SouthPaul says:

[QUOTE=ali;22573]The ghost is about to get scraped. Berto does alot of dumb **** in the ring but I think his speed and power will make up for it.[/QUOTE]

Boy oh boy, Ali, Berto out did himself last night in the dumb dumb department! Halloween has passed but Berto didn't care... As he still was dressed down in a poorly created MAyweather costume.

By the way, good feed back from every one here. Thanks for the Sunday read.