

Festive Atmosphere At Donaire-Arce Weigh-In

Written by Kelsey McCarson
Friday, 14 December 2012 22:14



The fighters grinned broadly, but all expect them to clash fiercely on Saturday night. *photo courtesy Rachel McCarson*

HOUSTON -- There is music in the air today. A four-part Mariachi band stands atop the stage strumming. Behind them, a giant-sized promotional canvas stretches around them as if an odd frame to their picture. Upbeat sounds of Mexico's finest music fill the Plaza de Americas Mall in Houston. Top Rank is in town, and today is weigh-in day.

Fight fans and would-be shoppers gather around the media pen clamoring for a look. Some sway back and forth with the music. Others chat with their buddy about this or that. Some are playing on their phones or texting friends.

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Suddenly, there is a stir. Has one of the fighters from tomorrow's card entered? Is it Nonito Donaire, the brilliant Filipino fighter on the tail-end of a truly exceptional fighter-of-the-year campaign? No. Is it at least his opponent, the brazenly fierce Mexican warrior and perennial titlist, Jorge Arce? Not quite.

Julio Cesar Chavez, Sr., Spanish language broadcast commentator and perhaps Mexico's most celebrated boxing icon has arrived. I ignore my chance to photobomb a group of eager worshippers who have cornered him against the gate. After suffering them, he strides his way through the throng of autograph seekers and picture takers undeterred. He looks just as you might imagine him, stoic and strong.

Playing second fiddle, perhaps unfairly, is co-host and fellow Mexican boxing icon, Marco Antonio Barrera. He's loved here, too; but not adored. He appears to be but a crumb.

The band plays on a bit. People are gathered. Chavez is safely inside now. It's time for the weigh-in.

The bout sheet has shaved down sharply since original intentions were made. Gone is Subway commercial star and undefeated light heavyweight Mike Lee, who we're told is ill. Missing, too, is undefeated junior featherweight phenom, Guillermo Rigondeaux, whose opponent was deemed unlicensable in Texas. The card is now predominantly filled with bouts of the nondescript against hopeful beggars eager to please. No matter, the show must go on.

First up to the dais is the champion, Donaire. There is a mixture of boos and cheers. He weighs in a half pound under the 122-lb limit. He's down to his drawers now, but he doesn't seem gaunt or drained. He'll be ready tomorrow night. Next up is Arce. Cheers and whistles fill the arena. It is loud. The Mariachi band has stopped by now, but you wouldn't miss it in this ambience. After a breath of anticipation and a full naked strip, Arce makes weight exactly.

Top Rank VP Carl Moretti is on stage barking orders. The two men hear him and pose for pictures, first apart and then together. After what may amount to the happiest "stare down" ever witnessed by those in attendance, the two men who genuinely seem to like each other, Nonito

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Donaire and Jorge Arce, embrace each other with a hug. They then turn toward the camera clicks. Each man seems to enjoy the limelight. The two playfully tug over the WBO trinket Donaire has carried with him on stage. Way in the back and behind him, there is someone holding up high one of Donaire's other titles, the Ring Magazine championship, the one that used to mean more.

Invisible but not unnoticed, the two's tussle is a reminder of what they're really fighting for Saturday night. Gone then will be the smiles and silly banter, for these men are warriors on fight night. And while the Ring Magazine belt will be on a table at the arena likely placed next to the WBO belt the two men have graciously paid the organization to fight for, there will be something else going on.

Not there in the arena, but in our hearts and where it counts, the two will fight for something far more important in my eyes. You see, Nonito Donaire and Jorge Arce will also engage in battle for something quite real: the unfiltered, unfettered championship money cannot buy. They will fight for the right to be recognized as the true, lineal [TBRB junior featherweight champion of the world](#), and that is something to be excited about.

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Buzz Murdock says:

Donaire by massacre...Arce's aggressiveness will play into Donaire's hands...

SouthPaul says:

Imma' against the grain.... Gimme' Arce by aggressive thugged out Mexicano Cantina tequila drinking stoppage.

Radam G says:

Blame it on da rain! Holla!

SouthPaul says:

When he was sitting at the end of Donaire's punches I thought to myself I wonder if Andre Berto drew up this game plan? Either way Arce was doomed!