

Chasing Titles: Chris Arreola & Travis Walker

Written by David A. Avila

Thursday, 27 November 2008 19:00

Riverside's Chris "The Nightmare" Arreola and Florida's Travis "Freight Train" Walker remember when Americans used to dominate the heavyweight division.

They both want the distinction of bringing back a world title to the U.S.

Arreola (25-0, 22 KOs) and Walker clash on Saturday, Nov. 29, at the Citizens Business Bank Arena in Ontario to decide who will be first to crash the Eastern European stranglehold on the heavyweight world titles.

The Goossen-Tutor Promotions fight card begins early at 4:30 p.m. HBO's famed television crew will be announcing the fight to the rest of the nation.

Both Arreola and Walker want to disrupt the European monopoly, but first they must erupt on each other to discover who deserves first crack.

Walker says Arreola has never faced a real heavyweight.

"His fights have been with a lot of lighter weight guys, I'm a real heavyweight," said Walker (28-1-1, 22 KOs) of Arreola. "I'm not a cruiserweight walking around saying I'm a heavyweight. I'm a real heavyweight and it's time for him to find out."

Both American heavyweights have traveled on a similar path and are promoted by Goossen-Tutor.

"It would be great for Arreola to win and become the first Mexican heavyweight to win a world title," said Dan Goossen, the president of Goossen-Tutor. "But Travis Walker can win it too."

Arreola has been touted as the first heavyweight of Mexican lineage to truly have a shot at winning a world title. Promoters like Goossen see big dollar signs if he can reach the top level.

"They're hoping he wins because he's a Mexican heavyweight. I understand that, because it's good for business," said Walker, slightly angered that he's been overlooked. "But this is my business right here. This is not his business, it is my business."

For the last two years Walker has been asking for a match against Arreola, who's been gathering attention nationwide via television.

"When I first came they started talking about Jason Estrada and I had to get him," said Walker, who beat him two years ago at Soboba Casino by majority decision. "When I finally fought him I demolished him."

The Arreola fight almost didn't happen for Walker who was derailed by left-handed slugger TJ

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Wilson a year ago in Sacramento in the first round. He avenged that knockout defeat with a second round knockout two months later.

“It was great to come back with a victory like that. It was overwhelming,” Walker said. “I shouldn’t have lost that first fight.”

Finally, Walker gets his dream match with the Nightmare.

“He says I’ve never fought anybody with a winning record,” laughs Arreola. “Look at the guys he’s faced.”

Walker knows he needs a win to keep his place in line.

“There’s only one way to find out who’s the best,” said Walker while in Ontario. “He’s going to give me what I need to see where I’m at. And I’m going to give him what he needs to see where he’s at.”

Arreola and Walker are fighting to see who challenges the European stranglehold on the titles.

“He talks about knocking me out and everything,” said Arreola while at a media workout on Wednesday. “I don’t predict knockouts. But I will predict I’m going to win.”

Other heavyweights

Bakersfield’s Manuel Quezada is another heavyweight of Mexican lineage who is on the Ontario fight card and he faces Nigeria’s Teke Oruh, who lost his last fight by decision. Both need a win to stay among the top 50 heavyweights.

Quezada, 31, is trained by South El Monte’s Ben Lira, who also trains lightweight sensation John Molina. The Bakersfield heavyweight has a 13-fight win streak, including wins over Andrew Greeley and John Clark.

Oruh, 30, has wins over Jason Gavern and Clark but is not a big puncher. The winner of this heavyweight match could conceivably fight the winner of Arreola and Walker.

Additional bouts

Another Riverside prizefighter, Josesito Lopez (22-3, 13 KOs) is also on the boxing card. He was originally scheduled to fight Mongolia’s undefeated Bayan Jargal but that fighter’s team decided the teammate of Arreola has too many fights on his resume. Now Lopez is facing Salt Lake City’s Chris Fernandez (15-5-1, 9 KOs) in a junior welterweight bout.

East L.A.’s Shawn Estrada, a member of the U.S. Olympic boxing team that went to Beijing this past summer, makes his pro debut against Lawrence Jones (2-1-1) of Washington D.C. Estrada is a big middleweight and plans to try the 154-pound junior middleweight division.

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Michael Dallas Jr. (5-0) a slick fighting southpaw from Bakersfield, tries Mexico's Jose Lugo (10-5) in a six round welterweight bout. Dallas is managed by Jackie Kallen, the famous female boxing manager whose life was portrayed in the motion picture *Against The Ropes*.

Fight results

Kaliesha West suffered her first loss last week against Northern California's Ava Knight in a bout for a vacant regional title at Friant, California. It was a close fight but all three judges gave Knight the edge 77-75.

It was West's first loss as a professional.

"I truly feel if I had fought at Morongo or somewhere in Southern California I would have won the decision," said West. "But she won the fight. She is a good fighter."

West hopes a rematch can be made with Knight soon. Hopefully, she adds, for a world title.

Hattons

Ricky Hatton's victory over Brooklyn's Paul Malignaggi sets the table for a match with the winner of Oscar De La Hoya and Manny Pacquiao's match that takes place on Dec. 6, in Las Vegas.

Probably a big upset was Hatton's brother Matthew Hatton who beat rugged veteran Ben Tackie in a 10 round welterweight bout by unanimous decision. That was a truly big test the younger brother passed.

Fights on television

Fri. Telefutura, 8 p.m., Jesus Soto Karass (21-3-3) vs. Hicklet Lau (20-17-2).

Sat. HBO, 10 p.m., Paul Williams (35-1) vs. Verno Phillips (42-10-1).