

Can Saul “Canelo” Alvarez Draw Big Numbers & Beat Gomez?...AVILA

Written by David A. Avila

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Mexico's ultra popular Saul "Canelo" Alvarez prepared in Big Bear to make his second world title defense against another popular fighter Alfonso Gomez. Both hail from Guadalajara, Mexico but that's where the similarities end.

WBC junior middleweight titleholder Alvarez (37-0-1, 27 KOs) fights former television darling Gomez (23-4-2, 12 KOs) of the Contender reality television fame on Saturday Sept. 17 at the Staples Center. It's the same night Floyd Mayweather challenges WBC welterweight titleholder Victor Ortiz.

Outwardly, Golden Boy Promotions seems nonchalant about the simultaneous boxing affairs but they must be tied up in knots about success or failure.

Normally this would be TV programming suicide, but Alvarez's fight will be shown on the same HBO pay-per-view fight card as Mayweather-Ortiz. It's a very unique arrangement that Golden Boy is gambling will be a success.

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"He has a rock star like following in Mexico," said Richard Schaefer, CEO for Golden Boy Promotions. "He is clearly considered Mexico's new icon."

While Mayweather and Ortiz battle 300 miles away, Golden Boy Promotions is expecting a large Mexican following to attend Alvarez's fight in Los Angeles as he battles Gomez.

So far the fighter known as Canelo has been able to attract large crowds in Southern California. When he fought Matthew Hatton to win the title in March, the red head Mexican slugger sold out the Honda Center. He did the same in Guadalajara for his last title defense against Ryan Rhodes.

That was a surprise to many but not to his promoters.

"Here in America they call him the Mexican James Dean. In Mexico he is known simply as el Canelo," Schaefer said about Alvarez's drawing power.

The Mexican paparazzi follow him like cats follow a canary in his country. The fire headed Alvarez has quickly built a penchant for dating Mexican actresses and models including Miss Universe. It's a main reason that he now trains in Big Bear, California.

"The only thing on my mind right now is Alfonso Gomez," says Alvarez, 21, a man of few words.

Gomez, 30, has tasted television fame in the past with his gutsy performances on the reality show the Contender. Then, he followed that up with bravura wins over Arturo Gatti, Ben Tackie, Jesus Soto Karass and Jose Luis Castillo. Only a loss to Puerto Rico's Miguel Cotto was the sole defeat he's suffered in seven years.

"Fighting these mega fights for me are dreams come true. Unfortunately I wasn't successful on my first try, yet the experience to be with a great champion like Miguel Cotto and gave me a lot of experience and gave me a lot of confidence to pursue that same dream," said Gomez whose

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family moved from Guadalajara when he was 11 years old. "And so far I haven't lost since then, so now I get my second try against another superstar like Canelo."

Can Alvarez fight?

Many insiders who truly know the game such as former fighters and current fighters believe that Alvarez has real talent but is still very young.

"I think he's going to be a super star," said Sugar Ray Leonard who knows a thing or two about success.

Another junior middleweight contender, Shibata Flores, was a sparring partner for Canelo and also sees talent in the red head.

"He really is strong and knows what he's going in the ring," said Flores who served as a sparring partner in Big Bear. "Canelo is going to be around for a long time. Believe me."

Alvarez has been criticized by some for not fighting more well known or feared fighters so Golden Boy has put him on a litmus test with Gomez.

"I remember Oscar (De La Hoya) was being criticized as well. When you are on top, when you are the number one idol and so on, then you always have these naysayers and you always have these critics out there, and Canelo is experiencing that now as well," says Schaefer.

Gomez salivates at the opportunity.

"They think I'm just an opponent, but they've made a serious mistake," Gomez says.

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Golden Boy Promotions is betting it's right on two counts. First that Alvarez can fill the seats and add pay-per-view numbers. Second, that he will dominate Gomez in a competitive fight.

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Radam G says:

YUP! Canelo can and probably will draw BIG number and probably kayo Gomez. If Canelo doesn't get Gomez outta there, he is definitely not close to being as good as the hype is about him. Holla!

ali says:

Canelo is the truth.....Gomez is about to get his ass.whoop...