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Donaire doesn't have an easy target to take down in Narvaez (right). The young bomber will need to work annd think hard to take out the crafty, slick Argentine.

Nonito Donaire knows why he'll be in Madison Square Garden Saturday night and it's not simply to defend the WBC and WBO bantamweight titles he unified in February by knocking Fernando Montiel cold. He's here to knock New York cold because if he does he'll be hot.

Boxing is more than the manly art of self-defense. It's more than A.J. Liebling's Sweet Science or the dark craft of hitting without being hit. Boxing at the level in which Donaire plies the trade is a business and the business of boxing is to become a phenomenon, which is what promoter Bob Arum hopes to turn Donaire into.

Arum did the same for another Filipino fighter named Manny Pacquiao, who difficult though it may be to believe today only a few years ago was having trouble even finding someone willing

to train him. He came to Freddie Roach's Wild Card Gym in Hollywood and asked if he'd work with him and the rest is boxing and business history because together with Roach Pacquiao has become the biggest fiscal phenomenon in the fistic arts.

Donaire seems to have many of the same assets – a winning smile, crushing power and a willingness to wing punches with exceedingly bad intentions. That didn't take long to cause Montiel to fall to the floor despite being a fine professional and no soft touch. He lasted less than two rounds and it probably won't take much longer Saturday night against Omar Narvaez. At least that is Arum's hope because he has brought Donaire nearly 3,000 miles from his California home not simply to have New Yorkers watch him box. He's brought him here to excite an untapped group of potential pay-per-view customers because nothing sells like concussive power and Donaire has it.

Despite the fact there are far more Filipinos on the West Coast, Arum put Donaire in The Theatre at Madison Square Garden (aka the small room) in the hope he will dispose of Narvaez in the kind of spectacular way that will leave New Yorkers abuzz knowing if he does, the next step has been taken in transforming him from simply another boxer into, perhaps, a boxing phenomenon.

"A lot of people ask me why am I bringing Nonito Donaire to Madison Square Garden and they point out there are over two million Filipinos that live in the Los Angeles area and I tell them Filipinos live all over the United States,'' Arum explained recently. "There are about 400,000 Filipinos living in the New York metropolitan area and besides there are a lot of great fight fans in New York and this gives them the opportunity to see this phenomenal fighter up close and personal.

"For Nonito's future, he is being exposed to the Big Apple, fighting an undefeated fighter. Everyone that follows boxing knows he is a top pound-for-pound fighter but our goal is to make him a superstar. To compare that with Manny misses the point. With Nonito, we have to do it Nonito's way, dealing with who he is and what he represents. Nonito is as much American as he is Filipino because he has lived in this country for so long. I think he was a candidate for the US Olympic team. Manny spends his life in the Philippines. There is a difference there.

"We think that Nonito is such a great, exciting fighter and such a pleasing personality that as he rises in weight to 122 and 126 and maybe above that he will become a major superstar in the sport. The goal, as in any fighter, is to make him a pay-per-view attraction. How long that will take? It is sort of silly to make a projection. It will come when it comes.
"When it comes it will launch him into the elite superstar category where he will make his money based on how many people follow him on pay-per-view. I wouldn't say 2012 or '13. We'll know when it is time to make the move. We can't put artificial projections in the way of getting to the goal we want to get to.''

To reach such popularity requires you be more than a local hero. To make a living on

pay-per-view requires that portion of the world focused on boxing becomes focused on you. To accomplish that, Donaire figures he has to leave Narvaez out of focus, as he did Montiel.

Donaire (26-1, 18 KO) comes to New York off a startling second round knockout that stunned even veteran fight followers. Not that Donaire won but that he so overwhelmed Montiel that the fight shouldn't have lasted as long as it did and it barely lasted five minutes.

As he proved again that night in Las Vegas, Donaire is an explosive puncher for a little man, the kind of guy Pacquiao was before he began moving up from one weight class to another, sprawling opponents on the floor as he went. Donaire's allies figure he has the same kind of potential.

"The cannon that Nonito has, not even all of the elite fighters have it,'' insists his trainer, Robert Garcia. "You can be an elite fighter and not have that cannon. He sees the punches. He studies the opponents inside the ring and feels what's coming and he already knows what he's going to come back with.

"Montiel was landing a few body shots but Nonito was doing that on purpose to time that moment and it landed but not every fighter has that talent. You can be called the best pound-for-pound fighter in the world and not have that talent. Few fighters have it but Nonito is one of them. He is blessed to have it and takes advantage of it and he called it before the fight. He said that was the way it was going to end and two rounds later, we saw it.''

Now Donaire is hoping to follow Pacquiao's blueprint to pay-per-view stardom, a simply plan that demands not only victory but spectacularly dominating victories.

Donaire's problem, if he has one, is that unlike Montiel Narvaez is more a boxer who scores with movement and an understanding of ring geometry rather than someone who wades in looking for trouble. That creates a different and potentially more difficult problem than Montiel offered, one that could make his East Coast arrival more challenging in some ways than Montiel was.
Though he is young and confident, Donaire seems to understand this. Yet while he recognizes the problem and the opportunity in front of him in the end his faith is in one thing above all else – his gift.

"It's like a chess match with me,'' Donaire insisted. "If you make a false move, or an error in trying to hit me, make sure you get your hands where they are supposed to be or I will make you pay. That's the bottom line with me right now – my power has increased tremendously. The fight can end in one punch.

"I always believe my power is enough to change the fight regardless of how many rounds it is. I have said it over and over. The most satisfying victory is a knockout victory.''

Especially when you are on your first business trip to New York and your business is concussions but not neurology.