

WBA Champ Rico Ramos Makes First Defense Against Rigondeaux...AVILA

Written by David A. Avila

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As an amateur, Rico “Suavecito” Ramos showed an uncanny ability for boxing with a blend of speed and agility that caught the eye of onlookers amazed at his physical abilities inside the ring.

The recently crowned WBA junior featherweight titleholder Ramos (20-0, 11 KOs) meets his physically gifted equal in Cuba’s Guillermo Rigondeaux (8-0, 6 KOs) and the title is at stake on Friday Jan. 20 at the Palms Casino Resort in Las Vegas. Showtime will televise the Goossen-Tutor Promotion.

Superior athleticism can be a handicap for those prizefighters accustomed to reaping the benefits through their physical gifts. As they move up the ranks by defeating the less-gifted, they soon hit a moment in their career when a similarly gifted athlete stands in their way.

Meet Rigondeaux.

The Cuban expatriate southpaw has equal portions of speed, agility and power that rival Southern California’s Ramos. More than a few might say Rigondeaux’s physical gifts exceed the current champion. One further element in his war chest would be his vast amateur experience.

“He was a two-time gold medalist for Cuba with 400 amateur fights,” said Dan Goossen, president of Goossen-Tutor. “Rigondeaux is fighting someone else with a rich amateur career

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too.”

Cuba has long been a home for the best amateur boxing the world has seen in the past 50 years. A roll call of some of its past champions could last three verses of a Celia Cruz song and an encore. Boxing and baseball are Cuba’s business along with music, and they do it well.

The transference of amateur dominance to professional style prizefighting has not always enjoyed a smooth exchange. Very few former Cuban amateur stars have repeated as pro world champions, with the exception of Joel Casamayor and Yuri Gamboa. But lately a few more have come knocking on the door, such as Erislandy Lara and Rigondeaux.

Strangely, or not so surprising, is that the southpaws find more success than the orthodox style Cubans.

Rigondeaux has that left-handed quickster style mixed with boxing moves more complex than a 21st Century Rolex. Because he’s often the quicker fighter you can see the confidence in his facial expressions and most of his bouts have ended with the finality of a closed book.

Though Rigondeaux arrives as the favorite despite being the challenger, he’s never fought an opponent as a professional that can match both the speed and power. The Cuban has the experience advantage but Ramos has that bucket of energy called youth. It could be a very tactical match unless someone makes a grave error in judgment.

“I’ve had a great camp and I’m ready to go 100 percent,” said Rigondeaux, 31, whose last fight was 10 months ago in Ireland. That fight ended in a first round knockout win. “I’ll show you I am the champion.”

Southern California’s Ramos captured the vacant title last summer by coming from behind in the score cards against left-handed Akifumi Shimoda and blasting the Japanese fighter from his senses with a head crushing left hook.

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The usually jovial Ramos seems very upset about what experts predict and has some choice words to explain his sentiments.

“I’m going to keep the belt,” said Ramos, 24, with a look of indignation. “I’m staying undefeated.”

Can Ramos beat the Cuban star?

Fights on television

Fri. Showtime, 11 p.m., Rico Ramos (20-0) vs. Guillermo Rigondeaux (8-0).

Fri. Telemundo, 11:30 p.m., Luis De La Rosa (18-1-1) vs. Ivan Meneses (16-9-1).

Sat. Versus, 8 p.m., Jesus Soto Karass (24-6-3) vs. Gabriel Rosado (18-5).

Sat. Televisa, 8 p.m., Daniel Ponce De Leon (41-4) vs. Omar Estrella (15-3-2).

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bigmow21 says:

LOVE the article!!! I'm glad someone is capturing the greatness of this fight and the significance of these 2 fighters who could be future stars.