Written by David A. Avila
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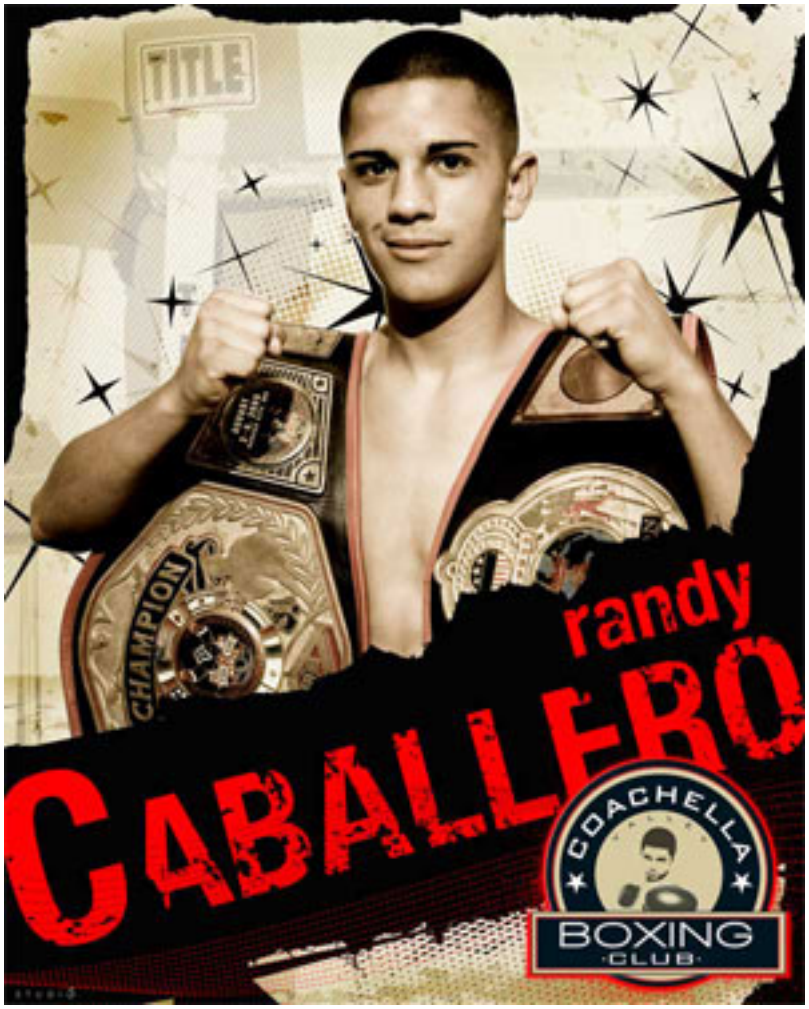

Caballero (15-0) should be on your watch list.

Boxing fans in the Southern California area have two big choices on Friday.

The speedy Randy “El Matador” Caballero (15-0, 8 KOs) defends the NABO bantamweight title against Manuel Roman (15-1-3, 6 KOs) on Friday in Indio at Fantasy Springs Casino. In Corona, Artemio “The King” Reyes headlines a heavy duty boxing card on the same day.

First, the televised card in Indio.

The undefeated Caballero was considered to be one of the front-runners to participate on the

U.S. Olympic boxing team as a bantamweight. But he did not want to risk more time and entered the professional ranks in March 2010.

“I was having problems with my hands,” said Caballero, explaining the decision to forsake the amateur program. “We didn’t want to waste time waiting for the Olympics.”

Since that time Caballero, 21, signed with Golden Boy Promotions and has raced through 15 opponents with his blend of speed and power.

No longer does he suffer hand problems and has already entered the top 20 list of bantamweight contenders.

Roman, 24, is no stranger to fighting in the Inland area. He’s had a total of seven pro fights in Corona and Ontario. He needs a win to enter the top 20 list and Caballero is blocking his path.

It should be a very interesting contest.

The co-main event will be New Jersey’s Michael Perez (16-1-1, 10 KOs) against New Mexico’s Fidel Maldonado Jr. (13-1, 11 KOs) in a lightweight clash set for 10 rounds or less. Both lightweights suffered losses recently and are eager to prove they’re capable of fighting at a higher level of prizefighting.

A middleweight bout features undefeated J’Leon Love (12-0, 7 KOs) of Michigan against once-beaten Ramon Valenzuela Jr. (7-1) of Chicago in a fight set for eight rounds. Other fighters participating will be undefeated middleweight Christopher Pearson (4-0), a former U.S. National champion and junior lightweight Santiago Guevara (3-0) of Montebello, California in separate bouts.

Corona

Reyes (16-2, 12 KOs), a welterweight contender, faces Corpus Christi's John David Charles (7-5) in an eight round main event presented by Thompson Boxing Promotions. Though Reyes lives in San Bernardino, he trains in Riverside at Capital Punishment Gym. He's looking for his second consecutive win.

The welterweight slugger hopes to continue his winning ways after losing by knockout in Las Vegas several months ago. His father had passed away after years in a coma and Reyes was blitzed by Alan Sanchez.

"I had lost my father in late March, a couple of weeks prior to my bout against Alan Sanchez, and I wanted to continue to fight because I knew that is what he would have wanted me to do. Although I lost that night, it put me in a mindset to continue with my career as a professional fighter," stated Reyes. "The loss was a minor set back and it has made me more determined. Losing my father was the most difficult thing that I had to go through but I only let if affect me in a positive way. I have closed that chapter and have begun a new one. I have to improve with every fight."

Two other welterweight bouts are scheduled including El Monte's Ricky Duenas and Santa Ana's Victor Garcia. Both of these 147-pound prizefighters are prospects looking to rise to the next level and are participating in separate bouts.

Duenas is a smooth southpaw with punching power and Garcia is a well-schooled boxer-puncher that has yet to be tested. Both are fighting in separate bouts but a future match between these two is inevitable. Fans can judge for themselves who is better between the two welterweights.

Riverside's Sindy Amador (8-0) has a six round female flyweight bout with Elizabeth Cervantes (3-9), who won her last fight in Temecula earlier in the year.

Colombia's Daulis Prescott (25-1, 19 KOs) meets Mexico's Saul Morales (11-1, 6 KOs) in a junior lightweight clash. Prescott's last fight was a quick third round knockout win in Ontario last month. Morales hails from Durango and is making his first professional appearance in

California.

For tickets and information call (714) 935-0900.

Fights on television

Fri. Showtime, 11 p.m., Randy Caballero (15-0) vs. Manuel Roman (15-1-3).

Sat. Telefutura, 8 p.m., Alan Sanchez (10-2-1) vs. Manuel Leyva (21-7).

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