

Brooklyn's Paul Malignaggi Defends WBA Title On Saturday

Written by David A. Avila
Thursday, 18 October 2012 15:56



Malignaggi working out at Barclays on Wednesday, during an open workout and autograph session. (Tom Casino)

Brooklyn's own Paul Malignaggi leads a talented fight card in his hometown after two years of waiting for the big moment.

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"I have definitely been looking forward to the opening of the Barclays Center for two years, ever since I signed with Golden Boy Promotions," said Malignaggi. "So it feels good that it's getting closer, it feels good that the moment is almost here, and I look forward to putting on a good show."

After 11 years Malignaggi (31-4, 7 KOs) returns to a Brooklyn prize ring when he faces Mexico's Pablo Cano (25-1-1, 19 KOs) in defense of the WBA welterweight world title on Saturday Oct. 20, at the Barclays Center. It's a loaded Golden Boy Promotions fight card that will be televised on Showtime.

When the California-based boxing company signed "The Magic Man" they probably never envisioned that he would travel to Ukraine and knock out Vyacheslav Senchenko and dominate a world title fight. They probably hoped for that scenario and when he delivered, it was like placing a ripe green olive on a martini.

"It was a tremendous win," said Golden Boy CEO Richard Schaefer.

During the past two years Malignaggi has trained in Southern California with Eric Brown and has thrived. The Brooklyn fight card basically showcases several other welterweights and junior welterweights all on one night. It could lead to yet another welterweight bash that includes the Italian Brooklynite.

"This is one of the main reasons I was happy to sign with Golden Boy two years ago, that I could be a part of this show and I could be a part of this event on a big stage in a big fight. And I was glad I did my job and Golden Boy did a tremendous job bringing me back, and now the moment is here and I'm ecstatic for it," said Malignaggi whose first pro fight took place in Brooklyn. This will be only his second time on a Brooklyn prize ring.

Health of body and mind can be attributed to the return of the quicksilver prizefighter who has never blinked when offered to fight the other welterweight world titleholders. At 31, Malignaggi still has time to wreck anybody's dream in the boxing ring. He's just one of those boxers you cannot underestimate.

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"I don't want to overlook Cano. I think all the focus has to be on him because he's so hungry and ready and motivated. But, yes, afterwards if everything goes well here like the plan is, then, yes, the welterweight division is packed with talent," said Malignaggi. "In order to get to the other big fight I've got to win this fight. So the focus remains Cano, but obviously any top welterweights in the world. I'm blessed and fortunate to be involved in a weight class with so much talent and there can be a lot of mixing and matching of styles and fights."

Cano packs power and that's always the equalizer in any fight.

"I'm still very young, but I have a lot of experience. I learned a lot from the fight with Erik Morales, and that experience is what I'm bringing," said Cano, 23, who fought Morales on September 2011. "I have a lot of talent, I have a lot of strengths, I'm very motivated, and that's what I'm bringing to this fight."

Malignaggi doesn't expect an easy fight.

"This is my opponent, and I've got to beat him," he said.

Other bouts

WBC junior welterweight titleholder Danny "Swift" Garcia (24-0, 15 KOs) meets Erik "El Terrible" Morales (52-8, 36 KOs) in a rematch. The 147-pound class fight will be held at Barclays Center where the Golden Boy Promotions fight card is holding its first boxing card in the brand new venue.

The last time Garcia fought he connected with a roundhouse left that floored Amir Khan and brought the WBA world title into his hands already full with the WBC title. Morales wants to spank the 24-year-old Philadelphia fighter who gave him a decisive beating last March in Houston. Garcia expects changes in the Tijuana warrior's attack.

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"I'm preparing myself for a war. He's the Mexican warrior, he has a lot of experience and I've got to be ready for all his tricks and whatever he brings to the table," said Garcia who is making his second world title defense. "I've got a tough task in front of me and I've got to get past this."

A number of other title fights and battles between contenders are also on the fight card including WBO middleweight titleholder Hassan N'Jikam (27-0, 17 KOs) fighting Peter "Kid Chocolate" Quillin (27-0, 20 KOs); and IBF welterweight titleholder Randall Bailey (43-7, 37 KOs) fighting Devon Alexander (23-1, 13 KOs). All four bouts will be televised on Showtime.

Fights on television

Fri. Telemundo, 11:30 p.m., Orlando Cruz (18-2-1) vs. Jorge Pazos (20-4).

Sat. Showtime, 7 p.m. Danny Garcia (24-0) vs. Erik Morales (52-8); Paul Malignaggi (31-4) vs. Pablo Cano (25-1-1); Peter Quillei (27-0) vs. Hassan N'Jikam (27-0); and Randall Bailey (43-7) vs. Devon Alexander (23-1).

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deepwater says:

paulie will use movement and a good jab to cruise to an easy dec. dimitry salita will then try and call out paulie or at least beg paulie for a fight. he will say brooklyn demands it, paulie should say go rematch china chin khan first and maybe Ill think about it.