

Boxing Lifted Beltran, Who Worked the Fields At Age 5

Written by Kelsey McCarson
Thursday, 05 September 2013 22:08



Lightweight contender Ray Beltran arrived in Glasgow last Monday, almost two full weeks before his showdown with WBO titlist Ricky Burns. Beltran is ranked No. 7 in the division by the Transnational Boxing Rankings Board. Burns is ranked No. 2.

Perhaps most famous for being Manny Pacquiao's chief sparring partner at the Wild Card Boxing Club, Beltran told TSS the gym helped him learn what it takes to become world champion.

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“I think you learn how to be competitive,” said the fighter who grew up in Los Mochis, Mexico. “There is a lot of competition there, so you learn to never back down or never slow down. If you do, someone will take you out. It pushes you to another level, and if you come out of a good group of fighters like that, it really means something.”

Ray Beltran is a fighter’s fighter. He’s tough, rugged and skilled. The 32-year-old wasn’t just handed TV fights because of a successful amateur career or because he’s somebody’s son. No, Beltran has climbed his way up the boxing ladder rung by rung.

This Saturday will be Beltran’s first world title shot, and he’s earned it.

“I come from a very poor family and it has been a hard road. Basically I had nothing. I had no food, no home, no electricity, nothing at all, that’s how I grew up. I started working at five years old picking on a plantation. I also worked with my grandpa planting corn, it was very hard, I didn’t like it but I did what I had to do.”

Still, Beltran didn’t let circumstance dictate his life’s outcome. In fact, he believes it has helped mold him into what he is today.

“Most of the people who come from poverty, all we know is to work and survive. And the only way to really make something of your life is boxing.”

Burns will be Beltran’s stiffest test to date. The Scotland native hasn’t lost a fight in over six years, and has held some form of a world title belt since September of 2010 when he dethroned Roman Martinez for the WBO super featherweight title.

Moreover, Burns has been some version of the same alphabet organization’s lightweight champion since he moved up in weight to defeat notable slugger Michael Katsidis in November of 2011.

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For his part, Beltran knows what he's up against.

"This is the biggest fight of my career."

Beltran, age 32, lives in Phoenix, and moved to the US when he was 16. He said the pressure of performing overseas as a representative of both nations is nothing compared to the pressure he puts on himself.

"What I represent is more personal. The biggest pressure I feel is I have to win because of my kids and my family. That's the main thing...the pressure I feel is the same as what I feel for every fight. I want to perform and look good, but to me the number one thing is my family."

Beltran is an old school fighter. He said he's never watched much film of his opponents beforehand, and he wasn't about to start doing it now.

"I've just seen Burns a couple of times, just one or two rounds. I don't usually see my opponents before the fight. I just look at their style a little bit. That's it. I don't need to watch much. I believe styles make fights. I don't care how much I watch, it comes down to what happens when I'm in the ring. When you're in the ring, you adapt right away. And if someone is more talented than you, you find a way to adapt and be the winner."

A win for Beltran wouldn't just net him the WBO trinket.

"It's my title shot. It's my dream come true. It would open the door for bigger fights and help me make my name in boxing."

And how does he envision Saturday night unfolding?

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“I don’t think about it much. I just think about things just like normal. I just want to go out there, enjoy it, and win the fight. I’m excited. This is a big fight, a world title fight. And I’m about to make my dreams come true.”

Beltran stopped short of making a prediction, save for who he believes will ultimately come out on top.

“It’s not good to make predictions or plans...I just predict a good fight and a great show. I am going to win. I don’t know how, but I am going to win the fight.”

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Radam G says:

Interesting, nice copy! Holla!