

## Andre Ward & Edwin “La Bomba” Rodriguez Jaw It Out

Written by David A. Avila

Thursday, 14 November 2013 23:03

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ONTARIO, CALIF.----A lot can change in a year, especially in boxing.

Fight fans are going to discover if the undefeated Andre “S.O.G.” Ward (26-0, 14 Kos) can return to his unbeatable form when he faces challenger Edwin “La Bomba” Rodriguez (24-0, 16 Kos) on Saturday Nov. 16, at Citizens Business Bank Arena. HBO will televise.

“Andre Ward is going to be simply the best,” said promoter Dan Goossen about his charge’s future.

The last time fight fans got a good look at Ward he was the scourge of every 168-pounder in the universe. He routed the very capable light heavyweight world champion Chad Dawson like one of those early morning street sweepers in Oakland brushing aside the litter.

Before that Ward blazed through a talented six-man tournament where almost every step of the way he was considered the underdog by those unfamiliar with his talent. Before the tourney many mislabeled him a pure boxer with no punch. Others saw him as a dainty boxer with little strength. Boy did he prove them wrong.

Ward blue-collared guys like Edison Miranda, who many saw as too strong and too powerful. Then world champion Mikkel Kessler lost his title in toe-to-toe action. Others like Allan Green, Sakio Bika, Arthur Abraham and Carl Froch learned the hard way that Ward entered each fight like a construction worker wearing a hardhat ready to hammer away or dig ditches.

“No gimmicks,” said Virgil Hunter, who’s trained Ward for many years. “He’s not going to give you gimmicks. He’s a plain and simple man.”

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After a year absence due to shoulder surgery Ward finds himself looking eye-to-eye with a prizefighter who has also never been defeated. But the opposition Rodriguez has faced may not equal Ward’s murderer’s row of opposition.

“He’s finding out what it’s like under the spotlight,” said Ward at the Thursday morning press conference in Citizens Business Bank Arena. “This is his first time. He’s been doing a lot of talking. I’ve been doing a lot of working.”

Rodriguez, who is promoted by Lou DiBella and managed by Al Haymon, has been confident about his role as the challenger. His can’t-wait attitude has caught the attention of media accustomed to seeing only the big names of boxing walk in with a bold attitude. During media day Rodriguez spoke confidently about what he intends to do to dethrone Ward.

“Andre Ward is a good fighter, I respect him for his accomplishments,” said Rodriguez. “But then again I don’t respect him.”

The New England-based prizefighter has built a fearsome reputation as a gym fighter who runs sparring partners out of any gym he’s trading leather.

“I’m not here to lay down for anybody,” Rodriguez said boldly.

During the face-to-face photos both jawed at each other with menacing gazes. It went on for several minutes with mere inches of air separating the two.

“Like Floyd Mayweather says: ‘This ain’t my first rodeo. I’ve been here before,’” said Ward. “I’m locked in. I take this sport real seriously.”

DiBella feels his protégé has what the others who faced Ward lacked before trading blows with

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the champion.

“Hunger is a very powerful weapon,” said DiBella, adding that Rodriguez hungers for the benefits that come with a win. “Anybody can be beaten.”

### Sergio Mora

East L.A.’s Mora (24-3-2) faces knockout artist Milton Nunez (26-8-1, 24 Kos) of Colombia in a middleweight clash set for eight rounds. Mora says he’s looking to stop the Colombian inside of eight rounds. “I’ve got to adapt to what the networks and promoters want,” Mora said. “Don’t expect my fight to go the distance.”

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#### **TotoyBato says:**

Watching the fight. Two B class fighters earning their paycheck. Nothing special.

#### **TotoyBato says:**

Ward wins. Yaaaay!