

## Southern Cal Gym Hopping: Indio's Jamie Kavanagh & De La Hoya

Written by David A. Avila

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INDIO, CALIF.---It may be the holiday season but the Indio Boxing Club has shifted into fifth gear and a number of fighters are not waiting for Santa.

Working feverishly on Monday was lightweight contender Ireland's Jamie Kavanagh and junior featherweight prospect Diego De La Hoya (*pictured above*). Both will be in the prize ring on back to back days, but in different countries. It was training day.

Kavanagh, 23, seems older than his age. The Dublin native has spent several years in Southern California in search of his dream of winning a world title. He first trained at Wild Card Boxing gym but has switched to the desert confines for the past four fights.

"We get good work here," says Kavanagh. "And we're treated well."

Kavanagh (15-0-1, 7 Kos) travels to Cancun, Mexico to fight Daniel Luis in a 10-round lightweight in the tropical resort. The fight will be televised on Televisa on Saturday Dec. 14.

"It's difficult for me over here but America is boxing," said Kavanagh. "We need more television to build a following."

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Kavanagh could have stayed in Ireland but most of the boxing events are held in England where the natives get the better opportunities. That's why he chose the U.S. and has slowly built up his fighting skills one step at a time.

"Jamie has been doing very well," said Joel Diaz, who trains Kavanagh.

The other boxer scheduled to enter the ring next week is young De La Hoya. Yes, he's related to seven-division world champion Oscar "The Golden Boy" De La Hoya. Like his older first cousin the skills are obvious as he pounds the mitts with incredible speed and power for his 122-pound frame.

De La Hoya, 19, makes his Southern California debut at Fantasy Springs Casino on Friday Dec. 13. He's tentatively set to fight Noel Mendoza (6-3) of Phoenix. Golden Boy Promotions is not wasting time with set ups for the "Golden Kid" De La Hoya. Mendoza lost in three rounds to former Olympian Joseph Diaz and to prospect Julian Ramirez. This is only De La Hoya's second pro fight. But trainer Diaz believes it's not a problem.

"He had over 250 amateur fights," said Diaz, who also trains WBO welterweight titlist Tim "Desert Storm" Bradley. "He has a lot of power, a lot of speed. The kid loves to fight and you love that in a fighter."

Diaz says it's his job to rein in the young colt's penchant for slugging it out. But he can't help but smile at the enthusiasm his protégé has for combat.

"He really loves to fight," said Diaz.

### **Caballero**

Coachella's Randy "Matador" Caballero stopped Jessy Cruz in their bantamweight fight in Florida on Monday night.

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