

## Return of Boxing to Inglewood's Fabulous Forum, Topped By Mikey Garcia

Written by David A. Avila

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WBO junior lightweight champ Mikey Garcia could be fighting this coming spring and it might be at the revamped Fabulous Forum in Inglewood, Calif.

Top Rank's Bob Arum revealed on Tuesday that Garcia will be headlining a fight card at the venue now named the Fabulous Forum and that he also plans to do numerous shows at the former fight venue. The Madison Square Garden Company based in New York City owns the Forum and has already established it as a concert venue.

"What do you do when you don't have a concert?" said Arum while at the Beverly Hills Hotel.

Arum said that the new owners of the Forum are big fans of boxing and agree that it would be advantageous to feature regular boxing cards. From 1968 to 1999 a regular boxing show took place at the venue that also housed the L.A. Lakers, L.A. Kings and for a short while the L.A. Sparks. All those teams are now at the Staples Center in downtown L.A.

The last sponsor of boxing at the Forum was Jerry Buss, who guided the program from 1982 until the end in 1999. Prior to that, the original builder, Jack Kent Cooke, had established boxing at the venue located next to the Hollywood Park Racetrack in 1968.

"Jack Kent Cooke was a real big fan of boxing," said, Arum who knew Cooke. "He did the second Ali-Norton fight."

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More than 300 boxing shows took place in the Forum and the roster included champions such as Juan Manuel Marquez, Oscar De La Hoya, Mark "Too Sharp" Johnson, Tommy "Hitman" Hearns, Carlos Zarate, Sugar Shane Mosley, Marco Antonio Barrera, Chucho Castillo, Ruben Olivares and so many others.

### **Garcia vs. Gamboa?**

The undefeated Garcia, 26, looks to be the opening feature bout at the Fabulous Forum and if negotiations go smoothly, it could be against WBA lightweight titlist Yuri Gamboa of Cuba. For more than a year Gamboa had been clamoring for a showdown with Garcia, but now he's balking at the price.

Gamboa, 32, is seeking more money to fight Garcia, who is fighting at a lower weight division. If not Gamboa, then Garcia would be fighting a mandatory at the junior lightweight division.

### **Local prospects**

A number of local fighters will be fighting at the Forum, including Oscar Valdez, Diego and Jessie Magdaleno, Saul Rodriguez and many others.

"We have a lot of good local prospects," said Arum. "The question is will fans go to the Forum. It's not the same high profile as Staples Center, but it has advantages of inexpensive parking."

On Feb. 15, three of the prospects will be fighting at C. Robert Lee Activity Center in Hawaiian Gardens, California. Also, Brazil's highly touted Esquivia Falcao, a former Olympic silver medal winner, will be on the same show.

"Falcao is huge in Macao," Arum said. "It still has a significant population who speak

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Portuguese.”

A return to boxing at the Forum would make an interesting dilemma for other local boxing shows in Southern California. Top Rank will be televising its shows, Arum said.

Can Top Rank bring back boxing successfully to the Forum?

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