

## Can Abner Mares Rise Above the Chaos?

Written by David A. Avila  
Monday, 30 June 2014 14:21

---



**A wicked delayed left hook by Mexico's Jhonny Gonzalez caught Abner Mares flush and seemed to simultaneously scramble his five-year-plan that included winning three world titles.**

Since that one round loss, on Aug. 28, 2013 at the StubHub Center, Mares has embarked on jagged trek that sent him from Santa Fe Springs, Calif. to Mexico, then Oakland, and also prompted him to refuse several bouts, including a rematch with his conqueror Gonzalez.

It's all explainable, says Mares, who told this to the media on a recent conference call, that he suffered two rib injuries which forced him to avoid fighting.

During the time off, Mares switched to trainer Virgil Hunter, the defensive guru for Andre Ward, Amir Khan and Alfredo Angulo. For several years Clemente Medina had prepared Mares for his successful world title runs which saw him take the bantamweight, junior featherweight and featherweight world titles.

Mares insisted that he needed a defensive specialist like Hunter to shore up his defending skills. It wasn't the first time he's switched trainers. In the past Floyd Mayweather, Nacho Beristain and Joel Diaz had worked the muscular Mares' corner. All three are very good in teaching defensive techniques. The Southern California prizefighter, though, feels comfortable with Hunter.

## Can Abner Mares Rise Above the Chaos?

Written by David A. Avila  
Monday, 30 June 2014 14:21

---

“I’ve shown a lot of progress,” explained Mares about his new experiences with Hunter. “It’s all defensive. That’s why we are here. Even before the last fight I was getting caught with punches.”

But Mares needs more than defensive shoring-up, he needs stability.

Rumors have spread that Mares was advised to ignore his manager Frank Espinoza, whose contract with Mares allegedly expired this past May. Espinoza had offered a number of fights since that loss to Gonzalez, including a rematch. Nobody knows for sure who advised Mares to ignore Espinoza’s offers but fingers are pointing to Golden Boy’s departed Richard Schaefer and Al Haymon. Or it could have possibly been Mares' own decision.

### The Fight

Mares (26-1-1, 14 Kos) meets Puerto Rico’s Jonathan Oquendo (24-3, 16 Kos) on July 12, at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. Ironically his former manager Espinoza had offered that same fight just days before their mutual contract ended.

“Three days prior, I sent him a contract for this same guy, Jonathan Oquendo,” said Espinoza, who signed Mares in 2009. “But he didn’t sign it.”

Other fights offered to Mares by Espinoza were Efrain Esquivias, Mike Oliver, Jason Velez and Jhonny Gonzalez, among a few others. All were declined.

Espinoza has decided to head to arbitration over the matter with Mares.

Mares refused to comment on the matter other than say his contract is over with Espinoza.

## Can Abner Mares Rise Above the Chaos?

Written by David A. Avila  
Monday, 30 June 2014 14:21

---

Before Espinoza signed Mares, the three-division champion seemed stuck in cement as he was passed over as a marquee fighter. With the Southern California boxing manager backing him Mares fought and defeated Yonhhy Perez, Vic Darchinyan, Joseph Agbeko, Eric Morel, Anselmo Moreno, Daniel Ponce De Leon and Jhonny Gonzalez. All were former world champions or current world champions when Mares faced them. In another twist of irony Darchinyan, Agbeko and Ponce De Leon later signed contracts with Espinoza.

Mares has a swirl of controversy orbiting his chaotic world, including the move from attacking pressure fighter to boxer puncher.

“Virgil is a good trainer for defense. I will need a couple of rounds but then I’ll be ok,” Mares said of adapting to Hunters' changes. “I’ve always like to go toe-to-toe. But the boxing I’ll bring back.”

Can Mares rise above the chaos?

“I have nothing against Abner. (But) I feel strongly he owes me those nine months,” Espinoza said. “It’s the principle.”

[WATCH RELATED VIDEOS ON BOXINGCHANNEL.TV](#)

[Comment on this article](#)

**oubobcat says:**

Before the Gonzalez loss, I thought Mares was one of the top pound for pound fighters in the sport. He fought arguably the toughest scheduled of any fighter and not only would find a way to win but do so impressively.

I was shocked that Gonzalez knocked him out last year. I thought it was the upset of the year.

That was a devastating knockout loss. It is the kind of knockout loss that sometimes fighters don't recover from. Mares seems different though than most fighters. Was he maybe looking

## Can Abner Mares Rise Above the Chaos?

Written by David A. Avila  
Monday, 30 June 2014 14:21

---

past Gonzalez and just got caught cold early? Or does he have a susceptible chin and will this KO loss have lingering effects?

I am not sure and for those reasons am very interested to see how he responds when he returns to the ring. I will say I think it was a blessing in disguise for him to have the Gonzalez rematch fall through for the time being. I think Mares needs a confidence booster before getting back in the ring with the man who utterly destroyed him in the first round.