

## We Will See What The Fight Game Can Still Be

Written by Rick Folstad  
Wednesday, 09 February 2011 15:05

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Anyone who says the fight game is dead or dying should pull up a chair and watch this fight. They'll get a chance to see what the fight game can still be.

It won't be a stylish fight. Not a lot dancing around and clinching, going through the motions. You won't see some overgrown heavyweight huffing and puffing by the third or fourth round, throwing haymakers and hoping something somehow lands.

These are the smaller guys, the one's who have lifted the fight game onto their backs and kept it alive and well while the heavyweights have all but faded away.

There won't be a lot of wasted effort in this fight. No intentional head butting or strutting. It will just be clean, tough, pure boxing the way it's supposed to be.

If you're a true boxing fan, you already know about this fight. You've known about it for quite awhile. Just hearing the name of one of the fighters - Nonito "The Filipino Flash" Donaire (25-1, 17 KOs) - is enough to make you mark your calendar and send away for tickets.

This is a bantamweight title fight between Donaire and Fernando Montiel (43-2-2, 33 KOs), a Filipino versus a Mexican, with national pride on the line. Good friends, the two are both among the best pound-for-pound fighters in the world no matter what any record book or sanctioning body says.

Between them, they've scored 51 knockouts in 69 fights, which isn't bad for bantamweights.

Montiel is the WBC and WBO champion, but if I was picking the winner, I'd go with Donaire. At 28, he's the younger of the two, but he's already won the world flyweight and super-flyweight titles. He's 25-1 with 17 knockouts and he's won his last 24 fights in a row. He's won eight of his last nine fights by knockout. That includes his big fifth-round win over Vic Darchinyan in July 2007. Donaire caught Darchinyan with a left hook that is still talked about by anyone who saw it.

Donaire proved it wasn't a fluke this past December when he stopped a tough Volodymyr Sydorenko in the fourth round of their fight in California. Now, Donaire is looking at the biggest fight of his career. And he says he's ready.

"I think I'm a better strategist than Montiel, but he has more experience," Donaire said on a conference call earlier this week promoting their Feb. 19 fight at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas (HBO). "He has a tremendous body punch, but I have a pretty good punch too. In terms of strength, I think I have (the edge). I'm naturally strong at this weight. I'm 200 percent sure I'm ready for this fight."

Though Donaire and Montiel are friends, that doesn't count for anything when the bell rings. Both know they have to put their friendship on hold the night of the fight. And both know they'll

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still be friends when it's over.

"I don't hate (my opponents), but I try to hit them as hard as I can," said Donaire, who moved to California from the Philippines when he was 10. "When you're in the ring, the person in front of you is just another hurdle you need to jump."

Articulate and personable, Donaire is a devastating puncher who just happens to look like the kid next door. The second most famous fighter coming out of the Philippines, he's also an excellent ring technician. He adapts to what his opponent gives him.

Montiel has his own following in Mexico. He's one of only four Mexicans to have won titles in three different divisions. The others are Cesar Chavez, Erik Morales, Juan Manuel Marquez and Marco Antonio Barrera.

"I always thought I was one of boxing's elite fighters," Montiel said through an interpreter. "But my fight in Japan (when he stopped Hozumi Hasegawa in the fourth round last April and unified the title) was one of those wins that put you at another level. I think that fight opened up the Donaire fight, which for me, was great."

Montiel said he was impressed by the way Donaire handled Sydorenko in December. But Montiel says he's not Sydorenko

Sydorenko just stood in front of him and got hit," he said. "I'm not going to stand in front of him like that.

"(Donaire) has a lot of speed and he's an intelligent fighter. But the question to me is, how is he going to react when he faces a guy who is just as quick and intelligent as he is? I don't think he's faced anyone equal to him. This is the first time he'll have faced someone who is just as good as he is."

"It's going to be a tough fight and it will be up for grabs. But I believe I can win this fight, and that's what I'm going to do."

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**FighterforJC says:**

I hope they like punch each other in the face and stuff maybe get a black eye.

**brownsugar says:**

the fight between Donaire should have been hyped like Bradley vs Cunningham,.. I mean Alexander. This is a fight deserving non-stop hype and buzz but it seems to have flown over the heads of the "pop" loving masses. If Donaire lives up to his potential like I think he will and

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starches Montiel in the later rounds he's guaranteed to set the rest of the division on fire as he cuts a burning swath thru the competition like a radioactive meteor... I'm so hyped for this fight... of course Mares vs Agbeko is gonna be a must see fight too. (thank you showtime)