

What's Next For Nonito? BORGES

Written by Ron Borges

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Nonito Donaire wants to unify the bantamweight title, a process promoter Bob Arum wants to begin May 28 on HBO against WBA title holder Anselmo Moreno. Only problem is some people associated with Donaire say Arum's promotional contract with the WBC/WBO bantamweight champion runs out that month. Arum disagrees. Of course, he does.

Oscar De La Hoya, Arum's most hated promotional rival, would like to promote Donaire or, failing that, drive up Arum's cost for keeping him on the reservation but to do that he has to be sure Arum's promotional agreement is up in May. Assuming De La Hoya cares about that, of course, which is always open to debate because this is boxing where the only thing a contract guarantees is that someone somewhere is disputing its validity.

Donaire's manager, Cameron Dunkin, has said several times he has no problem with a Moreno fight and why would he considering that the light-hitting southpaw has only 10 knockouts among his 30 victories (30-1-1)? He's not opposed to staying around at 118 to fight Abner Mares either if Mares can survive a night with Joseph Agbeko in pursuit of the IBF 118-pound title next month.

Then again, Duncan is also not opposed to seeing Donaire move up to 122 pounds for a brief stay and then on to 126, where two money-making opponents await in Juan Manuel Lopez and Yuriorkis Gamboa, a position he's held for quite some time.

Of course, if Mares wins and Donaire stays with Arum it all but makes a full unification of the bantamweight title impossible because Mares is promoted by De La Hoya and Arum hasn't done a co-promotion with him since the Manny Pacquiao-Ricky Hatton fight in 2009.

So where is Donaire headed? Nobody knows for sure and Duncan isn't talking because he's been ordered not to by Donaire's advisors even though no one in Donaire's camp knows more about boxing than Dunkin does. Go figure.

Why is it that boxing so often ends up in this kind of confusion? Here's Donaire coming off a spectacular second round, one-punch KO of Fernando Montiel, poised to become the latest little man to make it big, and nobody can be sure what his next move will be even though a lot of people are claiming it's a May 28 HBO date with Moreno.

HBO believes they have that fight set for May 28 and maybe they do. Then again, maybe they

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don't.

Arum believes he's ready to do for Donaire what he did for Pacquiao and maybe he will. Then again, maybe he won't get the chance.

De La Hoya, among several other promoters, is ready to sign Donaire when his contract is up, assuming it really is. Maybe they will. Then again, maybe they won't.

Trapped in the midst of all this is Dunkin, who has done a brilliant job moving Donaire, Kelly Pavlik, Brandon Rios and James Kirkland, among others, through the maze that is prize fighting. Surely he's got his ideas on this but when reached in Las Vegas Tuesday all he could say was, "I'm on a gag order from his attorney. Nonito has gone to the Phillipines, I think. It's a strange situation but I can't talk. I can't even comment on what he might be doing. Until I hear back from them I can't do anything."

Managing a fighter first requires you be able to talk about him, both publicly and privately. Unlike some managers in boxing, Dunkin has never been one to seek the spotlight, believing the fighter is the person people want to hear from, but he has always been frank and informative about the careers he's directing.

Right after Donaire stopped Montiel, Dunkin seemed more interested in moving his fighter up to 122 pounds, where he feels he'll be stronger and even more dangerous than he is at 118. Although many were calling for Donaire to unify the bantamweight title Dunkin didn't particularly see a sound business reason for pursuing that unless he could land Mares, which isn't likely if his fighter remains with Arum.

He may still feel that way or he may not but however he feels he's keeping it to himself, waiting for Donaire and his wife to return to California and for their attorney to let him off the choke chain. Of one thing you can be sure however - if Agbeko defeats Mares and is wearing the IBF bantamweight title Dunkin probably doesn't want anything to do with him.

That is not because Donaire couldn't beat him or that Agbeko is King Kong. Rather he is the worst of things for a boxer – a significantly dangerous tough guy who brings nothing to the table from a business sense but trouble from a boxing sense.

One could argue he would bring 1/4th of the bantamweight title and that would be true if he defeats Mares but trying to wrestle that belt out of his hands is not worth the difficulty for a rising star like Donaire. An insurance company would say the risk-reward ratio is out of whack there, and that's before you factor in negotiating with Don King, Agebeko's promoter.

But who knows? If Donaire believes unifying the bantamweight title is important enough to him he may insist upon it and there's not much Duncan could do but counsel him otherwise.

"I have no idea what's going on, honestly," Dunkin said. "I've never had this happen to me in boxing."

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Not talking and not knowing are two different things to be sure but one thing seems certain - Donaire would be well served to follow up his big victory over Montiel with another appearance on HBO. But should he make it against a light-hitting southpaw with seven successful title defenses?

While it's true Moreno twice was taken the distance by Wladimir Sidorenko, a fighter Donaire blew out in four rounds last December, that doesn't guarantee Donaire looks good against him even if he's fairly confident he'd win. Southpaws, even ones who hit like it's a pillow fight, can be confusing, irksome and difficult to look good against even in the best of circumstances. Why follow a massive KO win with an opponent like that?

Cameron Dunkin may have an opinion on that but he'll have to get back to you on it.

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Radam G says:

Naku! I'm peeping at the clock, and it's PINOY TIME! Somebodyee oughta recognize! Moreno is going down in four or less. He is gonna fall like a bird not ready to fly right outta da nest. Moreno is a soft-punching chump with bad legs. The Filipino Flash is gonna scramble dat sucka like eggs. He is gonna eat that sucka up like balut. Oh, YUP! Blowing another Pinoy horn, I'm gettin on my toot. POOOOOOOOOOO-POOO-POO! Holla!

EXAMINERAUTHOR says:

I have seen some past fights of Moreno in the youtube. I concluded he would be a give-away for Nonito. Very hittable. His punches are predictable. He is slow. He would be lucky if he reaches or lasts 2nd rd with Nonito. Nonito is an excellent and lightning ambidextrous fighter. It would be too difficult for Moreno to figure out what style is he going to use against Nonito. He could suffer the same fate as Montiel.

brownsugar says:

Moreno is tall and likes to move,.. the aerobically attuned Moreno can ride his mountain bike for the entire 12 rounds,.. stamina is good... he give a lot of lateral movement and tries to stick between the transitions of changing directions... somewhat cute but not slick enough for Donaire.. the downside to Moreno is that he's only capable of delivering love taps... no power... and he moves well but is not really "quick". Donaire by KO.

ultimoshogun says:

If unifying the bantamweight title isn't on Donaire's list of conquests, i'd like to see him move up to 122 after the Moreno fight to take on Guillermo Rigondeaux, and of course eventually moving up again to face Juanma and Gamboa.