

WBA Interim Champ Rigo Fights Casey In Dublin Saturday

Written by The Sweet Science
Tuesday, 15 March 2011 19:01

Rigondeaux crossed Atlantic to make big splash in Saturday's world title fight defense versus Irishman Casey in Dublin

CORK, Ireland (March 15, 2011) – WBA Interim World Super Bantamweight Champion Guillermo “The Jackal” Rigondeaux, arguably the greatest amateur boxer of all-time, arrived March 7 in Ireland to complete his extensive training for his first title defense this Saturday night (Mar. 19) in Dublin against Irish favorite, former European title holder Willie “Big Bang” Casey.

The Guillermo-Casey title fight features a pair of unbeaten boxers headlining a show promoted by Top Rank, Nowhere 2 Hyde Promotions and Dolphil Promotions. RTE will air the fight live in Ireland and it'll be available to watch online at www.rte.ie/live starting at 6 PM/ET, 3 PM/PT in the United States.

Rigondeaux (7-0, 5 KOs), a southpaw now fighting out of Miami, was a 2-time Olympic Gold Medalist, as well as a 7-time national champion who captured a pair of World Championship titles during his amazing 243-4 amateur career.

After breaking training camp in Houston (TX), The Ring No.6-rated super bantamweight Rigondeaux traveled to Ireland for his third visit having experienced an Irish heart-warming welcome in January, when he held a public workout before hundreds of mightily impressed boxing fans at the luxurious Montenotte Hotel in Cork.

Unlike other world champions who would have a half-dozen or so supporting team members for a fight in a foreign country, especially one half-way around the world, Guillermo's fans have purchased more than 1,200 tickets for the nearly sold-out show at The City West Convention Centre in Dublin.

Rigondeaux' somewhat surprising popularity in the Emerald Isle can be traced to his amateur days and Guillermo's winning 2001 gold-medal performance at the World Championships in Belfast.

“Rigo” defected from Cuba and made his pro debut May 22, 2009, won the NABA super bantamweight title in his third action as a pro and last November in only his seventh fight, he won a unanimous 12-round decision against Ricardo Cordoba (37-2-2) to become the WBA Interim 122-pound divisional champion.

Casey (11-0, 7 KOs) stopped Paul Hyland in the fourth-round of their November 6 fight in Willie's hometown of Limerick (Ireland), capturing the vacant European super bantamweight crown. The 29-year-old Casey, however, relinquished that strap in order to challenge Rigondeaux, who will have Ronnie Shields as his chief second for his third straight fight.

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Irishman Gary Hyde has been Rigondeaux' manager since he signed "The Jackal" in Cuba to an exclusive management agreement in early 2007. "Rigondeaux defending his world title in Ireland is a dream come true for me," Hyde said from his office in Cork. "We are all very confident that 'Rigo' will leave here March 20th with his title and continue his quest to unify the 122-pound division.

"Casey is a true warrior and I'm sure that he will turn in the fight of his life to try and dethrone the greatest amateur boxer of all-time, 'Rigo,' who became world champion in only his seventh professional bout. But he hasn't fought anybody close to having Guillermo's brilliance and he'll realize that right after the opening bell. In my lifetime, I have great memories of Irish fighters in world title fights – some won and others didn't – but Casey will not have the luck of Irish this fight. He will be thoroughly out-classed by this modern-day phenomenon, Guillermo Rigondeaux."

Hyde also has two other unbeaten fighters in action on the Rigondeaux-Casey card, Manchester, England welterweight prospect Mark Heffron (4-0, 3 KOs), and Georgian junior welterweight Levan Ghvarmichava (2-0, 2 KOs).

The highly-touted Heffron makes his first Irish appearance, in his first scheduled 6-round bout, against David Pulido (6-9, 2 KOs) having fought all of his pro fights, thus far, across Europe in The Netherlands, Poland, Hungary and at home on the undercard David Haye-Audley Harrison WBA Heavyweight Championship show.

Hyde first took special notice of 2007 and 2009 World Championship fighter Ghvamichava in 2009 when Levan defeated 2-time World Amateur Championship winner and 2008 Olympic bronze medalist, Rosniel Iglesias Sotolongo, of Cuba. Ghvamichava, who is trained by Paul and Sean McCullagh in Belfast, faces veteran Mihaita Mutu (27-16-2, 10 KOs) in a 4-round bout. Levan has already dazzled fans with his immense potential, starting with his pro debut this past January in Dublin, in which he defeated Konstantins Sakara by a second-round knockout. In his most recent fight last week, Levan took on 72-fight veteran Laszlo "The Rock" Komjathi, who went the distance with current WBA light welterweight champion Amir Khan, former world titlist Andriy Kotelnik, and world title challenger Wily Blain. Ghvarmichava nearly put Komjathi to sleep in the opening round and finished-off his rubbery legged opponent in the second.

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