

Tony Grano, Pito Cardona, Luis Maysonet Fight April 9 In Hartford

Written by The Sweet Science
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Saturday Night Fights Returns Apr. 9 to Hartford Grano headlines 'The Willie Pep Boxing Classic'

Cardona-Maysonet co-feature at Conn. Convention Center

HARTFORD (Mar. 17, 2011) – Tradition returns to Hartford on Saturday night, April 9 when Hard Hittin' Promotions ("HHP") presents "The Willie Pep Boxing Classic," featuring local heavyweight Tony "TNT" Grano, as well as a Hartford bragging rights battle between veterans Israel "Pito" Cardona and Luis Maysonet, at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford.

"We believe Connecticut has and is producing some great fighters, as good as any state, and we want to showcase them right here at home," HHP director of boxing Craig Salamone said. "Boxing has a rich tradition in Hartford, starting with legendary Willie Pep and continuing to Marlon Starling and 1996 U.S. Olympian Lawrence Clay-Bey. Our goal is to bring boxing shows back every few months, based at the beautiful Connecticut Convention Center, and grow from there. Everybody is excited about the April 9th show with the return of one of New England's most popular fighters, Tony Grano, along with the long anticipated grudge match between Cardona and Maysonet, and a group of Connecticut's most promising prospects and hometown favorites."

Grano (17-2-1, 13 KOs), fighting out of nearby Hebron, finds himself in a crossroads fight against veteran "Diamond" Dominique Alexander. The 8-round main event represents retribution of sorts for the WBF All-Americas heavyweight champion and 2005 U.S. Nationals winner, who suffered a knockout for the first time in his last fight to Nicolai Firtha in June. Grano's statement win to date was a dramatic stoppage of previously unbeaten Travis Kauffman (18-0) on ShoBox.

Alexander has been in the ring with some of the best including former WBO heavyweight champion Shannon Briggs and current WBO cruiserweight titlist Krzysztof Wlodarczyk, in addition to world heavyweight title challengers Kali Meehan and Fres Oquendo, and Odlanier Solis who challenges WBC heavyweight king Vitali Klitschko this Saturday.

The 8-round co-feature is an interesting match-of two of Hartford's all-time best fighters in a 10 round junior middleweight bout. Cardona (36-10, 28 KOs) is a former USBA and NABF lightweight champion who went the distance with undefeated IBF champion Paul Spadafora in 1999. "Pito" holds victories against Jeff Mayweather, Ivan Robinson, Sam Girard and Golden Johnson.

Maysonet (32-11, 25 KOs), who fought for the WBU welterweight crown in 1995, has fought standouts Thomas Damgaard, Hector Camacho, Robinson, and Louis Veader.

The undercard is stacked with some of the best young fighters in New England, including

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Meriden (CT) by way of Mexico bantamweight Danny Aquino (5-1, 1 KO) vs. James Owens (4-2, 2 KOs), Puerto Rican junior welterweight prospect – training in New Haven – Javier “El Chino” Flores (5-0, 4 KOs) vs. game Norwalk (CT) veteran Shakha Moore (10-15-3, 2 KOs), and promising New Haven featherweight and former amateur standout, Luis Rosa (5-0, 2 KOs) vs. Tommy Attencio (4-6, 2 KOs), all in 6-round bouts. Undefeated East Hartford Joseph “Chip” Perez (5-0, 2 KOs) faces Charles Vanderveer (1-1, 1 KO) in a 4-rounder.

Also scheduled to fight on the undercard are a pair of Middletown (CT) favorites, light heavyweight Doug Cartelli (1-0) and pro-debuting junior middleweight Willie Picard. They’ll be facing the Williams brothers, respectively, Jaquan (pro debut) and Charles (0-1), from North Carolina. Undefeated Philadelphia junior lightweight Frank Trader (7-0, 2 KOs) meets an opponent to be determined in a 4-round clash. All fights and fighters are subject to change.

Tickets are priced at \$100.00 (ringside), \$80.00 (preferred seating), \$60.00 (reserved) and \$40.00 (general admission) and are available to purchase by calling 860.402.4838 or The Lions Den at 860.613.2394.

Willie Pep: Born Guglielmo Papaleo in 1922 in Middletown, CT. He was a 2-time world champion who retired in 1966 after a 26 year professional career with an amazing 229-11-1 (65 KOs) record. In 1990, Pep was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York. He died November 23, 2006 at the age of 84.

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