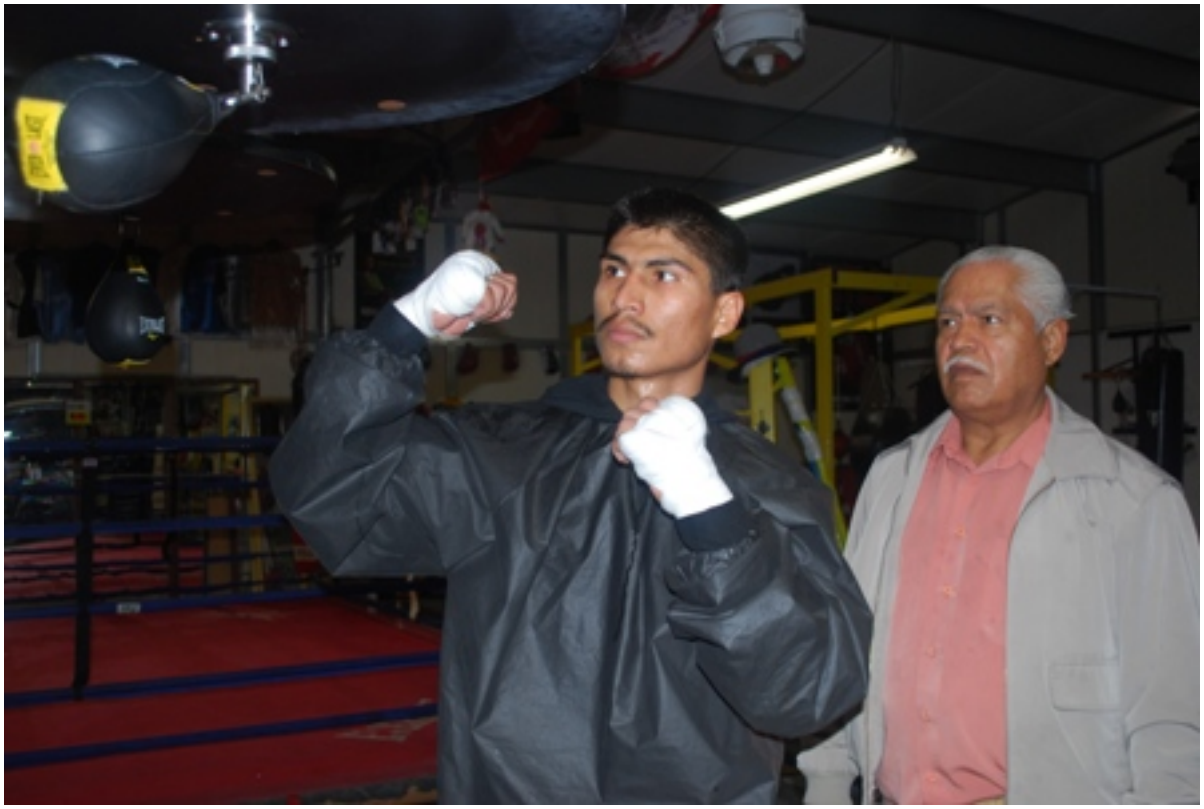
Written by David A. Avila
Wednesday, 23 March 2011 09:12



A shot at the featherweight crown dangles in front of undefeated boxers Matt Remillard and Mikey Garcia.

California's Garcia (24-0, 20 KOs) faces Connecticut's Remillard (23-0, 13 KOs) on Saturday on the undercard of Cuban Yuri Gamboa's title defense at the Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City. A portion of the Top Rank card will be televised on HBO.

Most times the word undefeated means a particular prizefighter hasn't traded punches with anyone in his talent category. More than a few "undefeated boxers" are out there protected by promoters because of their drawing power or lack of talent.

Garcia and Remillard don't have these accommodations. They're simply rising up separate ladders: Garcia from the West Coast and Remillard from the East Coast. And here they are at the junction for title function.

In the case of Garcia, the Moreno Valley, California prizefighter fought an elimination bout and won the right to meet Gamboa. But it was possibly felt that the danger of little known Garcia beating Gamboa to a small audience and small purse didn't make sense... and it didn't.

Top Rank's brain trust felt another fight alongside Gamboa's title defense might familiarize the boxing public with Garcia's talent. He's a speeding bullet looking for a target.

Remillard is not a patsy. The rugged power boxer has paid his dues and made more than a few heads turn including elite boxing trainer Buddy McGirt.

“He’s the real deal,” said McGirt, who now has a boxing gym in West Los Angeles. “He’s got a lot of skills. He’s going to be too much for Garcia.”

In Riverside where Garcia is trained daily by his father Eduardo Garcia, the pair are a common sight at local gyms from Coachella to Maywood, California. Sparring partners are a premium and it’s difficult to find willing partners more than one time.

“When Mikey goes inside gyms, guys suddenly leave complaining of being sick,” said one promoter who asked to remain anonymous. “He hurts them.”

“I saw three of his (Remillard) fights on video,” said Garcia, age 23. “He comes forward and throws a lot of punches.”

Garcia is the youngest of the fighting family from Oxnard and he’s tutored by his father and future Hall of Fame trainer Eduardo Garcia. The family moved to Riverside County a year ago and has brought their fighting style to the region.

“I’ve never seen anyone like Mikey,” says Willie Schunke, whose gym II Feathers Boxing Gym is where the Garcias prepare for fights. “Mikey doesn’t take much time off. He’s always in the gym working.”

Last year was a busy one for Garcia who engaged in five bouts, including an IBF title elimination bout with veteran Cornelius Lock of Las Vegas. The Nevada prizefighter had upset one contender, Roger “Speedy” Gonzalez, and two prized prospects Juan Garcia and Orlando Cruz. The Moreno Valley boxer stopped Lock in the 11th round.

Both Garcia’s realize this fight will be decided by mistakes.

“I don’t think he’s a smarter fighter but we got to feel out what he does best,” said Eduardo Garcia, who guided both Fernando “El Feroz” Vargas and Robert Garcia to world championships. “He (Remillard) wants to fight and throws a lot of punches and that’s what we like.”

Remillard, 24, lives in Harford, Conn. and beat rugged Jose Hernandez of Texas and former world champion Mauricio Pastrana, a former junior flyweight now fighting at featherweight. Steadily Remillard has gained popularity for his no-nonsense ethics in the ring.

“He’s there to fight and not to run around,” said Mikey Garcia. “I like to see what he does the first few rounds then make adjustments later on.”

The winner should be fighting Gamboa if he wins.

WBA and IBF champ Yuri Gamboa

Cuba's Yuri Gamboa (19-0, 15 KOs) defends the IBF and WBA featherweight world titles against Mexico's Jorge "Coloradito" Solis (40-2-2, 29 KOs) on the main event of the Top Rank fight card.

Solis has hung around the top of the featherweight standings with some notable wins including a victory over formerly undefeated Francisco Cordero of Colombia. Most people remember Solis for his losing effort against current welterweight world champion Manny Pacquiao back in 2007. That was the only time Solis was stopped by knockout and now he faces a similar talent in speedy Gamboa.

Gamboa, a former Olympic star for Cuba with more than 300 amateur fights, has faced superior competition since turning professional in 2007. Though not tall, Gamboa's advantages are extremely quick hands, power and the ability to either box adeptly or power through opponents with his southpaw style.

Should Gamboa and Garcia win they could face each other later this year.

Fights on television

Fri. Telefutura, 11:30 p.m. Antonio Escalante (24-3) vs. Alejandro Perez (14-2-1).

Sat. HBO, 10 p.m. Yuri Gamboa (19-0) vs. Jorge Solis (40-2-2).

Comment on this article

the Roast says:

You gotta love that. Two undefeated fighters on the rise laying on the line. Somebodys 0 has got to go! Looks like a nice twin bill.

the Roast says:

OMG! Just noticed the quote of note has finally changed. Congrats to Bobby C, one of the true top dogs up in here. That's OK that the Roast didn't get it. I know how Hagler felt that night in Vegas. That's cool I won't walk away like MMH and move to Italy. The Roast will just keep hittin em over the fence. This well never runs dry.

Radam G says:

Hehehehehehe! Ya are too much, the Roast. I'm sure that you are honorable mention with a good intention. Holla!

the Roast says:

Thanks Radam, or should I say, Kid Rapido?

the Roast says:

It didn't take too long to see whose 0 was gonna go. Garcia was clearly a level or two above Remillard. The best part of this fight was the Gatti clip. Remillard's corner should have stopped it after round nine. Good sportsmanship afterward. Garcia might have a chance with Gamboa. A little unimaginative in there but a good straight puncher. Great to see Nick Charles at the mic. Fight the good fight Nick!

brownsugar says:

Great to see Nick rebound from the most feared killer in the world. There is nothing as humbling as cancer. Great fight... it's rare to get such a great undercard before such a spectacular main event. awesome.

ultimoshogun says:

Garcia's the third fighter i've seen in recent weeks who has left me in anticipation for their next fight, the other two are Brandon Rios and ofcourse the smooth operator Ismayl Syllakh. Boxing's future is looking bright!