

Bernard Hopkins Leads Big Fight Card at Staples Center...AVILA

Written by David A. Avila

Thursday, 13 October 2011 12:42



Critics, fans and fellow prizefighters had been saying Bernard “The Executioner” Hopkins was getting old when he emerged on top of the middleweight division by defeating Felix Trinidad in 2001.

Even back then people questioned how much longer the Philadelphia boxer would last.

Here we are witnessing yet another upstart trying to topple the legendary Hopkins (52-5-2, 32

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KOs) as Chad Dawson (30-1, 17 KOs) takes a crack on Saturday at Staples Center in Los Angeles. It's an impressive fight card but no one on the card is more impressive than Hopkins. HBO pay-per-view will televise.

Line up another youngster.

"I want to embarrass another young so-called gun of the world, of the boxing world, and prove that Bernard Hopkins is not better, but just different," said Hopkins during a conference call. "And that's the page of a history book that I'm establishing-or I established since beating (Felix) "Tito" Trinidad in 2001. That's when my legacy started, and we're well into 2011 right now."

Here comes Dawson who was once dubbed one of the top fighters pound for pound by Floyd Mayweather several years ago. Since that time he lost a decision to Canada's Jean Pascal, a victim of Hopkins.

"I'm excited about the fight. As you all know, the fight (discussions) went for years, and then we finally got it," said Dawson, who along with Vitali Klitschko are the only fighters to defeat heavyweight Tomasz Adamek.

Hopkins looks to add another scalp to his list of good fighters felled by his wizardry. Antonio Tarver, Glen Johnson, Roy Jones Jr., Kelly Pavlik, Oscar De La Hoya, Winky Wright and Trinidad are among those who were out-smarted by the Philadelphia boxing wizard.

In his last fight Hopkins became the oldest prizefighter in boxing history to capture a world championship when he defeated Pascal in Canada.

How does he do it?

Defense is the key to Hopkins victories, combined with an acute knowledge of angles, when to hold, when to hit and when to stay inside. Clinics are provided to the boxing world each time he steps in the ring. He's one of the few who could have stepped in the ring with Ezzard Charles, Archie Moore, Sugar Ray Robinson or Charley Burley. Not many could.

Dawson with his long arms and quick jabs poses a problem as all of his opponents do, but can he solve the spells that will be cast his way during the fight?

"I think everybody should just enjoy me while I'm here, because nothing lasts forever and I think we all know that," Hopkins said.

Other bouts

Venezuela's once highly touted Jorge Linares (31-1, 20 KOs) gets another opportunity to show the world that his talent is for real when he meets Mexico's punching machine Antonio DeMarco (25-2-1, 18 KOs).

Linares was bombed out by another Mexican a few years back and won't be facing an easier

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opponent in the brawling style of DeMarco, who slugged it out with the late Edwin Valero toe-to-toe. The Venezuelan boxer-puncher may not get another opportunity like this again. DeMarco is young and strong.

Danny "Swift" Garcia (21-0, 14 KOs) basically gets a Hollywood debut when he clashes with former junior welterweight world champion Kendall Holt (27-4).

A few months ago Holt upended Julio "The Kidd" Diaz by knockout. He's clever and dangerous. Garcia was tested severely by Nate Campbell, another veteran who was fighting much heavier than his natural weight. Garcia could be in over his head against Holt.

Paul "The Magic Man" Malignaggi makes his L.A. debut and finds himself facing another Mexican slugger, Orlando Lora (28-1-1, 19 KOs), in a welterweight match. The Brooklyn boxer should be able to defeat the Mexican but injuries are always lurking.

Another Brooklyn boxer Luis Collazo (31-4) is on the card and he will face Mexico City's Freddy Hernandez (29-2, 20 KOs). Collazo is a former world champion and has the slickness to frustrate Hernandez. But it only takes one punch to win.

In the preliminaries Coachella's Randy Caballero (12-0, 7 KOs) is scheduled to fight an eight-round affair. Several other bouts are planned. Tickets start at \$25.

Fights on television

Fri. Telemundo, 11:30 p.m., Michael Franco (19-0) vs. Orlando Cruz (16-2-1)

Sat. HBO pay-per-view, 6 p.m., Bernard Hopkins (52-5-2) vs. Chad Dawson (30-1); Paul Malignaggi (29-4) vs. Orlando Lora (28-1-1); Antonio DeMarco (25-2-1) vs. Jorge Linares (31-1); Danny Garcia (21-0) vs. Kendall Holt (27-4).

Other fight chatter

On the co-main event La Puente's Abraham Lopez (15-0, 11 KOs) meets Mexican veteran Gerardo Espinoza (28-11, 26 KOs) in a featherweight bout at the Ontario Doubletree Hotel. For more information (714) 935-0900.

Undefeated Michael Franco (19-0, 12 KOs) of Riverside travels to Kissimmee, Florida where he fights Orlando Cruz (16-2-1, 7 KOs) on Friday Oct. 14. Franco, 24, is now trained by Henry Ramirez who also trains heavyweight Chris Arreola and junior welterweight Josesito Lopez. The featherweight fight will be televised on Telemundo. Franco's last fight was this past May.

Junior featherweight standout Jonathan Arellano was honored last week by Ontario City Council for his contributions in and out of the ring. Arellano recently won the interim WBC Youth title and remains undefeated. Ontario cited Arellano's contributions to the city's youth as a boxing instructor and role model for many years.

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Heavyweight contender Chris "The Nightmare" Arreola (33-2, 28 KOs) is preparing for a battle with Alonzo Butler (28-2, 21 KOs) on Nov. 5, in Leon, Mexico. It's Arreola's first fight in Mexico. "It's hard to explain my feelings about fighting in Mexico," said Arreola. "It's like I'm thrilled because of their love for real fighters, but at the same time, it is important for me to put on a great show and live up to those expectations. It truly is a great honor to fight in Mexico and to box in a true Mexican environment. It's such a beautiful country."

Riverside Poly graduate Saul Rodriguez, 18, signed with Top Rank Promotions, said Cameron Dunkin his manager. Rodriguez recently won his pro debut by first round knockout. He is trained by Eduardo Garcia, who also trains his son Mikey Garcia in Riverside.

UFC 136 saw lightweight champion Frankie Edgar stop challenger Gray Maynard by knockout in round four. In other results Jose Aldo kept the featherweight title by decision over Kenny Florian; Joe Lauzon won by submission over Melvin Guillard; Chael Sonnen won by submission over Brian Stann; and Nam Phan won by decision against Leonard Garcia.

Sharif Bogere (21-0, 13 KOs) stopped Francisco Cordero (16-1, 13 KOs) in round three to retain the NABO lightweight title on Friday in Las Vegas. In a junior middleweight bout Jermell Charlo (16-0, 7 KOs) won a decision over Francisco Santana (12-3-1).

Mexico's very popular Mariana "Barbie" Juarez (30-5-3, 14 KOs) fights Gabriel Bouvier (7-1-1) to defend the WBC flyweight championship on Saturday Oct. 15, in Tlaxcala, Mexico. It's the second time they've met. Juarez stopped Bouvier by TKO five months ago.

In female title action in Mexico it was WBC junior bantamweight titleholder Ana Maria Torres (27-3-3) beating Marisa Portillo (10-5-2) by decision; WBF flyweight champ Irma Sanchez (21-5-1) beating Susana Perez (5-3); Maureen Shea (16-2, 10 KOs) stopping Yara Cabanas (0-1) in round two; Jackie Nava (25-4-3) beating Soledad Matthyse (9-3-1) by decision.

WBA featherweight world titleholder Jonathan Barros (33-1, 18 KOs) defends against former junior featherweight champion Celestino Caballero (34-4, 23 KOs) of Panama, who has lost his last two fights. Their title match takes place Friday Oct. 14 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

WBO junior bantamweight titleholder Caroline Duer (9-3) defends against Maria Nunez (11-8, 9 KOs) on Saturday in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Duer is making her third title defense. Nunez fights out of Paraguay.

A couple of bantamweight world title bouts take place Saturday Oct. 15 in Quintana Roo, Mexico as WBA titleholder Janeth Perez (13-0-1, 4 KOs) defends against Yanina Acuna (10-4-2, 3 KOs) and Australia's Susie Ramadan (21-0, 8 KOs) tangles with Jazmin Rivas (22-7, 9 KOs) for the vacant IBF title.

Francisco "Panchito" Arce (31-7-3, 22 KOs) fights Hugo Ruiz (28-1, 25 KOs) for the number one spot in the WBA bantamweight rankings. Arce is the younger brother of Jorge Arce, the junior featherweight world champion. Both Arce and Ruiz are from Los Mochis, Mexico where the fight takes place on Saturday.

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Marvin Sonsona (14-1-1, 12 KOs) fights Carlos Jacobo (16-3-1, 14 KOs) in a 10 round featherweight bout in Cebu City, Philippines on Saturday. Sonsona is a former junior bantamweight world champion.

WBO light heavyweight titleholder Nathan Cleverly (22-0, 11 KOs) fights Tony Bellew (16-0, 11 KOs) in Liverpool, England on Saturday Oct. 15. Cleverly, 24, fights out of Wales and is making his first title defense. Bellew, 28, fights out of Liverpool.

Argentina's Yesica Marcos (18-0-1, 6 KOs) stopped Simone Duarte (10-2, 3 KOs) in one second of round fourth on Saturday. Marcos wins the number one spot in the WBO junior featherweight division reigned over by Philippine's Ana Julaton.

AJ Banal (26-1-1, 19 KOs) won by decision over Mario Briones (20-1-1, 14 KOs) of Mexico after 12 rounds last Saturday. The fight took place in Bacolod City, Philippines. Banal retains the WBO Asia Pacific bantamweight title.