

Pocket Destroyers Mares, Santa Cruz, Moreno, Plus Big Bomber Angulo

Written by David A. Avila

Friday, 09 November 2012 14:59



Several decades ago a fight card featuring mini bombers like Abner Mares and Leo Santa Cruz in separate bouts was common place in the battlegrounds of Los Angeles.

Venues like the Olympic Auditorium, which is located a few blocks south of the Staples Center, and the Sports Arena, located a few miles in the same direction, were known worldwide for many of those bantamweight wars. Still another was the Inglewood Forum where bantamweight

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slugger Carlos Zarate and Alfonso Zamora met.

The late great writer-publicist Luis Magana used to label the bantamweights and featherweights as “pocket destroyers” because of their diminutive size, yet potent destructive power.

Los Angeles was a breeding ground and home base for any bantamweight in the world and they took part in some of the most spectacular boxing cards ever held. Now in the 2010s the bantamweights seem to be reloading.

The muscular and undefeated Mares (24-0-1, 13 KOs) enters the boxing ring with his WBC junior featherweight world title in hand and meets former WBA bantamweight titleholder Anselmo Moreno (33-1-1, 12 KOs) on Saturday, Nov. 10. The Staples Center will host the Golden Boy Promotions fight card. Showtime will televise.

Alongside Mares and Moreno will be a bantamweight match up featuring IBF bantamweight titleholder Leo Santa Cruz and Mexico's Victor Zaleta in the co-main event.

Mares has proven not only strong but intelligent. His boxing IQ enabled him to win the bantamweight tournament that featured world champions Vic Darchinyan, Yonhhy Perez and Joseph Agbeko. All of those titleholders were quite different in their approach and style. Mares concocted out a battle plan to defeat two and draw with one. Now he faces a more nimble opponent in Panama's Moreno.

“I think this could be a more mentally exhausting fight than a physically exhausting one for me. I know I have to be mentally sharp,” stated Mares during a media work out session. “With Moreno's style, if you miss, you cannot become frustrated. You have to keep working and that is one of the biggest keys for me.”

Moreno has a hit and run style that greatly frustrated Darchinyan when they met earlier this year. Plus, he suddenly stops and pops with enough power to keep opponents from just running in. He's a dandy.

“Obviously we both want to steal the night and we both want to be in the limelight. This is going to be a very, very, very tough fight for me. It's not going to be an easy fight. I understand this. He's the world champion. So, all I can say is that I'm very, very well prepared for this fight,” said Moreno, 27.

In the co-main event bantamweight sluggers will meet in a battle of power versus power.

Santa Cruz or “El Terremoto” as he's known, has steadily become a blunt force behind a tight guard and relentless body attack that no opponent has been able to figure out in a couple of years. Ever since signing with Golden Boy the East L.A. prizefighter has found his power and timing. Especially the timing part.

“I know Zaleta is a really good pressure fighter who likes to come forward and punch. This is going to be a really good fight. I can't wait,” said Santa Cruz.

Zaleta has never been knocked out and his losses came to Argentina's legendary Omar Narvaez and a close majority decision four years ago to a fellow Mexican fighter. Zaleta has power and doesn't believe anyone can stand up to him toe-to-toe.

We'll see.

“El Perro” Returns

In Southern California the name Alfredo “El Perro” Angulo excites boxing fans. Regardless of his loss to James Kirkland more than a year ago, many boxing lovers look forward to the return of “El Perro” to the ring.

After refusing to re-sign with Gary Shaw Productions the prizefighter from Mexicali eventually

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signed with Golden Boy and promptly lost. He also changed trainers and wrongly chose to work under Nacho Beristain in Mexico City. Though that trainer is a great tutor, the styles did not fit and Angulo was grossly unprepared to fight Kirkland at that time.

Then more bad news followed with the detainment by federal authorities that put him in a holding cell for more than six months. While in the facility Angulo grew out his hair and when finally released did not look at all like the old Angulo. Fans are eager to see what changes have been made by new trainer Virgil Hunter.

“I did go through a very difficult period, but I've proven to myself and I've proven to everybody that I'm ready for anything,” said Angulo who was detained for immigration problems. “I know that Casarez is a very good fighter. I've never asked for easy opponents. So if anything, I'm going to be ready and I'm going to give the fans what they deserve.”

Hunter also trains Andre Ward and now Amir Khan. He was recently voted “Trainer of the Year” by various boxing publications.

“I haven't really changed much,” said Hunter while at a recent press conference in Los Angeles. “You could say I add some things to his style but I don't change anything.”

Those additional weapons are what fans want to see on Saturday when Angulo (20-2, 17 KOs) fights Raul Casarez (19-2, 9 KOs).

Staples Center will definitely be boxing central on Saturday.

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