

Vanes Martirosyan Is Reloading For Title Hunt

Written by David A. Avila

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VAN NUYS, CALIF.-Vanes Martirosyan somehow flies under the radar when it comes to junior middleweights or middleweights.

The former U.S. Olympian and world title challenger fights out of the pulsating heart of West Coast boxing, yet despite his years of activity, only hardcore boxing fans know about him.

That could change quickly.

Martirosyan (33-1-1, 21 Kos) recently signed a promotion deal with Goossen-Tutor Promotions and is set to fight Mario “Aguila” Lozano (28-4, 22 Kos) in the main event on Friday, March 21. The Morongo Casino will host the fight card and ESPN2 will televise.

“We’re really happy to have him,” said Dan Goossen, president of Goossen-Tutor. “We think he can win the world title and much more.”

Last November, the Armenian-American boxer lost for the first time in his career. More importantly, it was a world title fight against Demetrius Andrade. The split decision loss could have swung in his favor. But that’s the way things have been going for Martirosyan.

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A year earlier, he fought Cuban dandy Erislandy Lara to a technical draw. An accidental clash of heads caused a cut near his eye and he did not have a proper cut man. The fight was ruled a technical draw by the judges.

Maybe his luck will change with a couple of Irish-Americans like the Goossens.

Joe Goossen is now his trainer and for the past 30 years he's seen all different styles of boxers enter his gym. In the beginning he had boxers like Michael Nunn, Gabe and Rafael Ruelas, Diego Corrales, Joel Casamayor, John Molina, to name a few.

"There are things, little things, that can be changed or altered," said Joe Goossen from his Ten Goose Boxing Gym in Van Nuys. "Vanes has a lot of tools, he's a great boxer and has a terrific right hand."

In Southern California, the sight of Martirosyan firing combinations with a fiery intensity, then walking outside of the ring as calm and pleasant as a monk, can baffle the unsuspecting. Inside the ring he's a murderer and outside he's a petunia.

"My dad always told me that when I'm in the ring sparring, even if it's my brother I should go all out," said Martirosyan. "Outside of the ring we can become brothers again. But not inside."

That's Martirosyan.

At the media day in Van Nuys the regular boxing tribe showed up in force. They know that Martirosyan has never been beaten. Maybe out-pointed once, but never beaten.

"I see a special talent," said Dan Goossen. "Now all he has to do is win."

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To many, including myself, the tall junior middleweight had a fighting style reminiscent of Mexico's Erik "El Terrible" Morales. As an amateur Martirosyan would tear apart other fighters so it wasn't a surprise when he defeated everyone to win a place on the U.S. Olympic Boxing team in 2004.

Somehow the talent was lost behind rows of bushes and retaining walls. Now, with a promoter who also has Andre Ward, Chris Arreola and a few others, Martirosyan won't be a statistic but a ballistic missile headed for his true place.

"I feel so comfortable here," said Martirosyan. "I think I finally feel this is where I've belonged all along."

One more factor in his favor: he's only 27 years old.

"Vanes has a lot of talent," said Joe Goossen.

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