**Edwin 'La Bomba' Rodriguez carrying on**

**Massachusetts boxing tradition**

***Mar. 17 vs. Donovan George in Theater at MSG, HBO Co-Feature***

WORCESTER, Mass. (February 24, 2012) - From John L. Sullivan and Sandy Saddler, to Rocky Marciano and "Marvelous" Marvin Hagler, Massachusetts has been home for some of boxing's all-time greats. The 21st century, though, has been somewhat lean, quantity-wise, to the point that Bay State boxers in particular, New England fighters in general, have been unfairly given a bad rap for being built-up against inferior opposition, overrated and protected.

Dominican-born super middleweight contender Edwin "La Bomba" Rodriguez, who moved to Massachusetts like Hagler, will carry on the Massachusetts fighting tradition on March 17 in his HBO debut against Donovan "Da Bomb" George, live from the Theater at Madison Square Garden in New York City.

The 10-round, non-title fight between the International Boxing Federation's ("IBF") No. 3-ranked Rodriguez (20-0, 14 KOs) and No. 11-rated Donovan (22-1-1, 19 KOs) with world title shot implications for the winner, potentially threatens to steal the show from the Sergio Martinez-Matthew Macklin main event on the DiBella Entertainment-promoted St. Patrick's Day show, ***THE REAL Middleweight Championship - Get Your Irish Up.***

Like many Mass. fighters before him, Rodriguez left the comforts of his Worcester (MA) home for training camp in Houston, taking advantage of superior sparring partners and warmer weather for outdoor training, as well as to avoid distractions associated with family members and friends. In short, they leave Massachusetts to better their careers, and today Edwin serves as a role model for younger Bay State fighters to emulate on their individual boxing roads.

In the recent past, several Massachusetts boxers have distinguished themselves on a grand stage, as Edwin plans to do Mar. 17 on HBO, including two-time World Boxing Association ("WBA") heavyweight champion John "The Quietman" Ruiz (Chelsea, MA), three-time "Fight of the Year" participant Irish" Micky Ward (Lowell, MA) and Mike Tyson-conqueror Kevin "The Clones Colossus" McBride (Boston).

"I never believed any of that talk," Rodriguez' head trainer Ronnie Shields spoke about negative reputations for Massachusetts fighters. "Look at Micky Ward - he fought three hellacious fights with Arturo Gatti. Ruiz fought Holyfield three times when he was good. And McBride sent Tyson into retirement. There are other good fighters from there, too. A lot of people who downgrade fighters from there don't know what they're talking about. The guys I'm talking about are real fighters. Edwin is the leader of the next wave of Massachusetts fighters."

"Sooner or later, you have to leave the nest," Ruiz said. "Massachusetts fighters go all over New England to fight, maybe travel to New York City or Philly, and then go away to train. That's what they have to do to improve their career. Edwin is a good fighter who has done very well so far. He'll have to get over a case of the nerves in his first HBO fight, but he'll get past that and do his job. If he keeps the drive he has, he'll go a long way in this sport, hopefully becoming world champion and representing Latinos like I did."

An exception to the rule was Ward, who fought outside of New England for most of his pro fights, but he has stayed in Lowell to this day. Rodriguez, according to many local boxing experts, has the best left hook to the body since Micky.

"Edwin's a highly-ranked super middleweight who can really punch," Ward remarked. "A good left hook to the body like his is a great equalizer. For me, it pulled out a few fights that I was losing. Edwin's a natural athlete and a humble guy."

"I've seen Edwin fight a few times and he's a good fighter," McBride added. "I wish him luck in a tough sport. He's going to get recognition fighting on HBO, something I never had the opportunity to do. Edwin's stepping up the ladder fast. If he keeps doing what he's been doing, he will be rewarded."

Tickets are priced at $505, $355, $205, $125 and $65, and are on sale now. Tickets can be purchased through the Madison Square Garden Box Office or through Ticketmaster, at ticketmaster.com, or by calling (866) 858-0008. Call DiBella Entertainment at (212) 947-2577, or visit www.dbe1.com and @loudibella on Twitter for more information.