

Manfredo-Spina II Is Set

Written by The Sweet Science
Tuesday, 12 February 2013 09:51

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (Feb. 12th, 2013) -- More than six years have passed since Peter Manfredo Jr. knocked out fellow Providence native Joey Spina on national television at The Dunkin' Donuts Center in what was, at the time, Rhode Island's biggest turf war.

As they prepare to face one another again **Friday, March 15th, 2013** at the Twin River Event Center in the latest chapter of their longstanding rivalry, both Spina (26-3-2, 18 KOs) and Manfredo Jr. (38-7, 20 KOs) are dealing with the fact there's much more at stake now than there was the first time they fought in 2006.

The pressure's higher than ever; Manfredo Jr., now on his second fight since returning to professional boxing in November, will turn 33 later this year, while Spina, coming off consecutive losses for the first time in his career, is 35. Time is no longer an ally, and a loss March 15th could derail both fighters in what is shaping up to be their final run at championship glory.

The Spina-Manfredo Jr. II showdown, promoted by Jimmy Burchfield's Classic Entertainment & Sports and appropriately titled, "Unfinished Business," will be fought at a catch weight of 170 pounds as the 10-round main event of a spectacular card at Twin River, which also features the return of heavyweight **Jesse Barboza** and the Rhode Island-debut of female bantamweight **No emi Bosques**

"The first fight between these two local heroes was the talk of the town six years ago, and the latest installment of this rivalry promises to be even bigger than ever," Burchfield said.

"No two fighters draw bigger crowds in Rhode Island than Peter Manfredo Jr. and Joey Spina, and with the two of them facing one another in front of what will be a packed house at Twin River Casino, this will turn into the must-see event of 2013.

"Our fans have been waiting more than six years for this rematch. We're the only promotional company in the world capable of turning this dream into a reality. Nobody makes bigger fights, and nothing divides loyalties better than a good, old-fashioned rivalry. Spina or Manfredo Jr.?"

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Take your pick - it's going to be a huge night."

When Manfredo Jr. and Spina first faced one another in 2006, both fighters were at crossroads in their respective careers. Manfredo Jr. had just made the jump from middleweight to super middleweight, a move punctuated by his third-round knockout win over **Scott Pemberton** earlier that year. Spina, the "K.O. Kid," was still undefeated, having just defended his World Boxing Council U.S. National Boxing Council (WBC USNBC) super middleweight for the fourth time while simultaneously capturing the International Boxing Federation (IBF) Inter-Continental crown with a knockout win over

Jay Pina

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Earlier that year, Spina dubbed himself "The *Contender* Killer" following an 11th-round, knockout win over

Jesse Brinkley

, a participant on

The Contender

reality television series. This irked Manfredo Jr., who also rose to fame as a finalist on the debut season of

The Contender

, and led to a high-stakes border war between he and Spina that culminated with their nationally-televised showdown on ESPN2 in October of 2006.

"He's got a big mouth and he has no respect for anybody," Manfredo Jr. said of Spina at the time.

Manfredo Jr. boldly predicted he'd "show [Spina] who's boss," and promptly kept his word, knocking out Spina in the third round of their scheduled 12-round bout. Spina, who broke his hand three weeks before the fight and re-aggravated the injury in the second round, never got over the loss; while preparing for a bout against veteran **Tiwon Taylor** at Twin River in 2009, Spina lamented the knockout against Manfredo Jr. as a reminder of what he lost both in and outside the ring.

"I never thought in a million years I'd lose to Manfredo," Spina said at the time. "I mean, Peter's a great fighter, but I just feel like I'm that much better."

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March 15th will be Spina's last shot at redemption, his final opportunity to prove he's the better fighter. For "The Pride of Providence" Manfredo Jr., it's a chance to take care of "unfinished business" and write the final chapter of this heated rivalry.

Spina-Manfredo Jr. II won't be the only rematch March 15th; Providence's **Alex Amparo** (5-1, 3 KOs) will look to avenge his first career loss when he faces Woonsocket, R.I., veteran **Joey Gardner** (10-5-1, 1 KO) in a six-round super middleweight rematch. Gardner beat Amparo by unanimous decision in November.

The undercard of "Unfinished Business" also features a six-round battle between light heavyweights **Rich Gingras** (12-3, 8 KOs) of Attleboro, Mass., and **Dennis Okola** (14-8, 4 KOs) of Nairobi, Kenya (now training out of Cheshire, Conn.), and a six-round interstate showdown between Boston middleweight

Julio Garcia
(6-3, 3 KOs) and
Thomas Falowo
(8-1, 6 KOs) of Pawtucket, R.I.

Looking to bounce back following his first career loss in November, light heavyweight **Kevin Cobbs**

(6-1, 2 KOs) of Burlington, Vt., will face

Paul Gonsalves

(4-2, 3 KOs) of Harwich, Mass., in a four-round bout. Barboza (5-1-1, 3 KOs), a Barnstable, Mass., heavyweight, will return to Twin River for the first time since 2010 when he faces

Jeremiah Witherspoon

(2-2-1, 1 KO) of Altoona, Pa., in a four-round bout, while Bosques (1-0), a St. Petersburg, Fla., native who now trains in Providence, will face Queens native

Vanessa Greco

(1-2-1) in a four-round bout. All bouts are subject to change.

Tickets for "Unfinished Business" are \$40.00, \$60.00, \$100.00 and \$150.00 (VIP) and can be purchased by calling CES at 401.724.2253/2254, online at www.shop.cesboxing.com or www.twinriver.com

, at the Players Club booth at Twin River, or through any TicketMaster location. Doors open 6 p.m. with the first bout scheduled for 7.

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(Twin River has waived its 18+ rule for "Unfinished Business." Anyone under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult and must enter through the West entrance.)