

James Kirkland Signs With 50 Cent, Fights Dec. 7

Written by The Sweet Science
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NEW YORK (October 16, 2013) -- Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson's SMS Promotions officially announced its signing of world light middleweight contender James "Mandingo Warrior" Kirkland (31-1, 27 KOs) to an exclusive promotional contract.

"James concentrates on conditioning and building strength," 50 Cent said. "He brings the fight to you and is aggressive in the ring. The crowd loves the action and I'm excited to make him a part of our team."

"I had a relationship with 50-Cent before he came into the boxing business," Kirkland explained. "We already had a friendship when he got this group together. He can do what no other promoters can do. He's a different type of promoter who can make things happen in and out of the ring for me. It's clear to me that I made the right decision."

Due to problems outside of the ring, the 29-year-old southpaw from Austin, Texas has been inactive since stopping Carlos Molina in the 10th round of their March 24, 2012 fight in Houston. Kirkland successfully defended his World Boxing Council (WBC) Continental Americas 154-pound title belt, originally captured November 5, 2011 when the knockout artist registered an impressive sixth-round technical knockout of Alfredo Angulo (20-1) in Mexico.

Molina is now the reigning International Boxing Federation (IBF) World light middleweight champion, while the WBA No. 5-rated Angulo recently lost a World Boxing Association (WBA) Interim championship fight.

Kirkland returns to the ring December 7 as part of an HBO tripleheader, headlined by Guillermo Rigondeaux vs. Joseph Agbeko, also featuring Mathew Macklin vs. Willie Nelson, from Adrian Phillips Ballroom at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

In the third HBO fight, Kirkland faces undefeated prospect and North American Boxing Organization (NABO) light middleweight champion, Glen "Jersey Boy" Tapia (23 KOs), from nearby Passaic (NJ). Rated No. 10 by the World Boxing Organization (WBO), as well as No. 14 by the IBF, the 23-year-old Tapia is a rising star who had a 130-4 amateur record and gained invaluable experience as Manny Pacquiao's former sparring partner.

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"I had this great opportunity come along with Glen Tapia," Kirkland spoke about his upcoming fight. "He just doesn't have what comes with knowledge in boxing, but he will know that December 7th. There are different levels of fighting, as they say in the street, and he hasn't fought anybody at my level in his 20 fights. I don't talk too much before a fight but, he doesn't have to worry about being 21-0, because I'm going to knock his ass out December 7th

"The proof is in the pudding. All I have to do is put in extra work and that's what I've been doing. I'm not overlooking him. This is his 'Mayweather' fight. He wants to win and be an exciting fighter on HBO.....that's not going to happen! It all comes down to me boxing at my best; I can beat anybody at 154 pounds or 160, name anybody. Who does what I do? There are a couple of cats at 160 who can put on a great performance but, right now, I'm concentrating on Glen Tapia. Congratulations for him getting this fight but we are at different levels."

In addition to his aforementioned victories over Molina and Angulo, Kirkland's other notable wins have been against Brian Vera (TKO8), who just lost a controversial decision to Julio Cesar Chavez, Jr., Joel Julio (TKO6) and Eromosele Albert (TKO1).

Although Kirkland will have been inactive 20 1/2 months when he fights Tapia, the explosive Texan doesn't feel ring rust will be a problem at all for him. "A lot of people know that I haven't been on a long layoff," Kirkland concluded. "I've been working hard since the beginning of my lawsuit. Now that things are in motion, I'm jumping right into the mix. My sparring sessions are like fights for other guys."

Fans may follow 50-Cent on Twitter @50cent and friend Kirkland at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/James-Kirkland/736672159693254>

SMS Promotions' growing stable of fighters also includes two-time world featherweight and reigning Interim WBA lightweight champion Yuriorkis Gamboa, former International Boxing Federation (IBF) featherweight titlist Billy Dib, former world super middleweight title challenger Andre Dirrell, undefeated lightweight prospect Mark Davis, light welterweight Luis Olivares and junior welterweight Donte Strayhorn.

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