

Romie Adanza Muay Thai Champ

by JOSEPH PIMENTEL / AJPress
Photos courtesy of www.iMuayThai.com



Galing Pinoy showcases the triumph of the Filipino spirit - the Filipino's innate perseverance to rise above. A double entendre, Galing Pinoy literally translates to both coming from (or brought to you by) the Filipino and Filipino ingenuity.



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"Some people you don't see them after a while," he said.

"I kept coming back because I liked it. I was happy I didn't get knocked out. I made it through. I didn't go down and didn't give up."

Adanza liked the challenge of fighting. It was mental and physical. He said through fighting he learned to discipline himself inside the ring and out in the real world. No more being a knucklehead, he said.

"I learned that I'm not the toughest guy in the world," he said. "I'm my own worst enemy. I'm good, as I want to be. As long as I don't turn into a knucklehead and be stupid, settle down and focus I'm as good as I want to be."

Five years since he stepped in the ring as a boxer, he turned to Muay Thai. His first choice was mixed martial arts but there isn't a weight class for him to compete in. Organizations like the UFC's minimum weight class are 146 to 155 pounds. So Adanza stuck with Muay Thai and it's paid dividends.

Since turning pro he's racked a record of 25 wins, 2 losses, and 2 draws and 13 of the wins coming in the way of knockout.

In a fight against Kim Morris of Canada, Adanza knocked out the Canadian fighter in less than two minutes in the first round.

Morris said that when Adanza, "cracked me in the nose, that's the hardest I've been hit."

Adanza knows that he has a long way to go before being mentioned as a top Pinoy fighter like Pacquiao, Vera and Vilorio.

Muay Thai has a long way to go before being mentioned in the same sentence as boxing and MMA but as long as Adanza keeps knocking out opponents in spectacular fashion, he might be recognized as a Filipino pioneer in the sport.

"My goal is to just show our fighting spirit like a Filipino warrior," he said. ■



PINOY fight fans know all about boxing champions Manny Pacquiao, Nonito Donaire Jr., Brian Vilorio, UFC mixed martial art stars Brandon Vera, Mark Munoz and Phillipe Nover but little is known about a small fighter with a big heart in the world of professional Muay Thai.

Fil-Am Romie Adanza is the current WBC Bantamweight US Champion in Muay Thai. "It would be great if I could be mentioned with the likes of those guys like Pacquiao and Brandon Vera," said the 29-year-old, 122-pound Adanza to the Asian Journal. "I'm not there yet but I'm hoping to be."

And Adanza will have his chance to be better known.

Next Saturday July 25, he'll defend his belt and try to reclaim his former title the Intercontinental WBC World Championship Muay Thai belt at the Hilton-Las Vegas. He's facing a familiar foe Paulo Da Silva.

In their first bout, Adanza defeated Da Silva by decision. In their second bout, Da Silva got the better of Adanza with the referee stopping the bout in the second round. Now, Adanza is out to recapture his belt.

"This is the most important fight of my life so far. I'll never take my titles for granted anymore, I need my belt back", said Adanza, who currently trains and is a trainer at Team Oyama at No Limits gym in Irvine.

Fighting for Recognition

There's not a lot of world class Pinoy athletes competing in professional Muay Thai.

There's Christine Toledo, a female Muay Thai champion (who will also fight on the same card as Adanza on July 25) and Bay Area native Michael Mananquil (17-1-1 9KO's) the IKK World Champion and WBC International Super Welterweight Champion but other than

those two, there aren't too many Filipinos competing in Muay Thai.

Pinoy's prefer watching and competing in boxing or even now mixed martial arts but Muay Thai is just as vicious and exciting as the other two. Muay Thai is a combination of boxing and kickboxing except that the individual could also use el-

bows and knees on their opponents.

Adanza said that his goal is to excite the crowd to keep them coming back. It's a reason why he is a known vicious striker in the Muay Thai circuit. He said that his game plan is to try and take out his opponent as quick as possible.

"I got to get to him before he gets me," said Adanza about his opponents.

But Adanza admits that his biggest opponent inside the ring is himself.

From Knucklehead to Champ

It takes a lot of courage to become a professional fighter.

It takes talent, heart, will, and determination. For Adanza fighting is all about combining all those attributes with patience and discipline.

Born in Houston, Texas, Adanza never had a stable home. His life consisted of constant moving - he lived in China and the Philippines before settling in California.

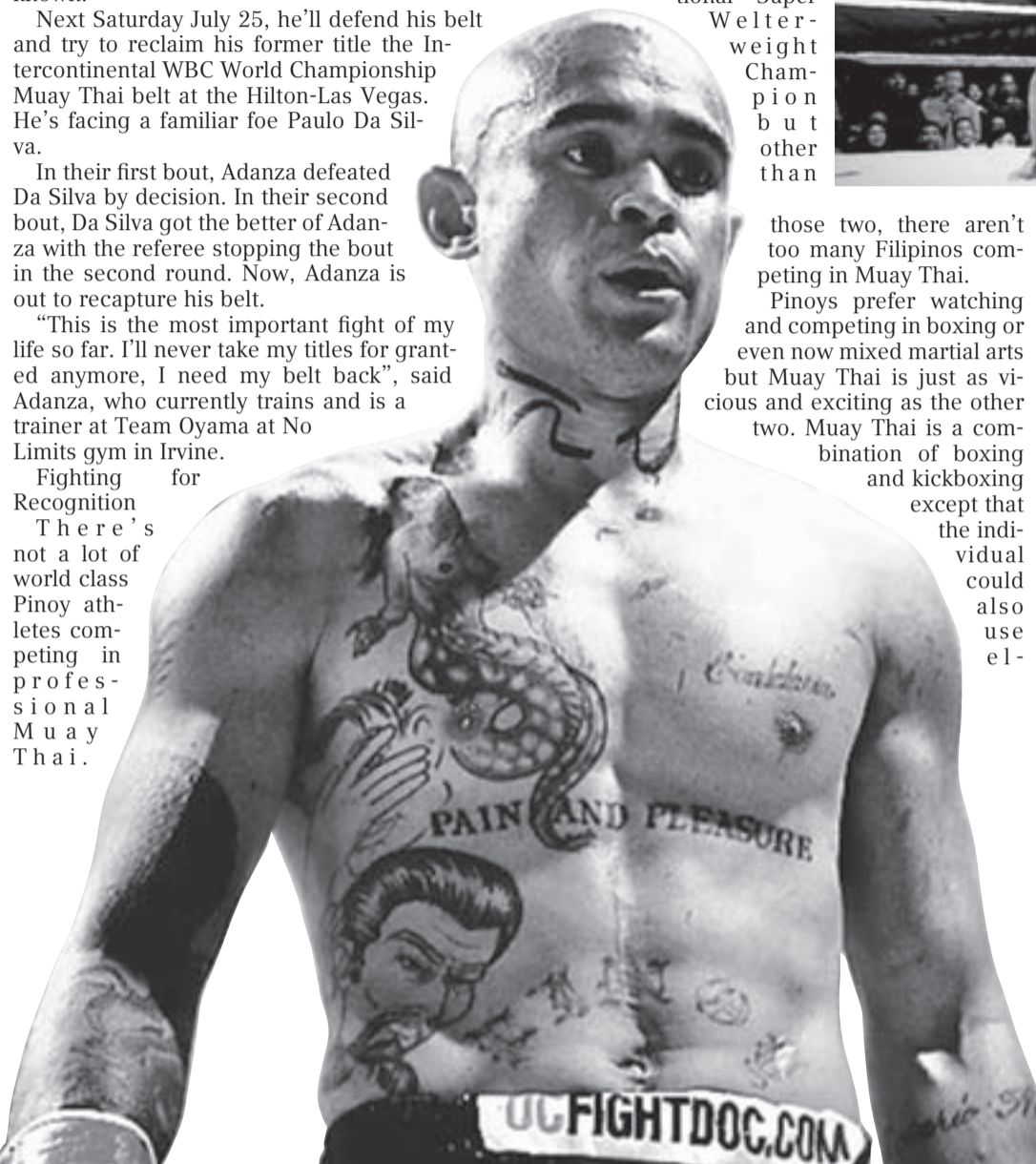
A "knucklehead" growing up, he admits he made a lot of mistakes. He was kicked out of high school and sent to an "alternative school."

He just had a lot of energy and a bad attitude, he said.

At 18, he stepped inside a boxing gym. He recalled the first time he was humbled in his life. Sparring with an experienced 21-year-old, Adanza remembers getting "beat down."

"I was fighting a guy by the name of Kamel," recalled Adanza. "I just remember blood going through my head gear. There wasn't an inch or centimeter that wasn't covered in blood. There was just blood everywhere."

While most people would have quit after that experience, Adanza came back and kept training.



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