

Donaire Jr. to Dedicate Fight to Tita Cory

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Steven Luevano (36-1-1 15 KO's), for the latter's championship title. Mark Melligen (15-1 11 KO's) of Cebu, Philippines will be in the card to fight against Mexico's Michael Rosales (21-3).

Big expectations

Donaire Jr., who has severed his ties with father and former trainer Nonito Donaire Sr., said this is a big fight for him.

Not only will Donaire Jr. fight without his father/ trainer for only the second time in his career, Top Rank executives (Donaire Jr.'s promoters) are hoping he can be the next Pinoy boxing superstar like Manny Pacquiao.

Donaire Jr. spoke to the heads of Top Rank this week, and they let him know that they see big things for him in the future.

"They basically were saying Top Rank has big hopes in me," said Donaire Jr. "They see that I can be a multidivisional fighter and champion. They see a big future because of my body frame and height."

Do my best

In the meantime, Donaire Jr. is focused on his opponent. Concepcion may not have a stellar record but he was a former world champion.

"The most dangerous part about him is his toughness and heart. He never gives up," he said. "Anybody with that mentality and heart is a dangerous fighter."

Jonathan and Dodi boy Penalosa is training Donaire Jr. Donaire Jr. said his new trainers are making him focus on using his height and long reach to his advantage.

"They just tell me to move my head and do the best possible to reach my goal," he said. "My dad has already taught me a lot but now they are forcing me to throw more jabs and use my height and to also be smart and cautious

when I'm in the ring. Overall, it's a been positive training camp."

"No matter what happens next Saturday, I'm going to do my best," he added.

Can Concepcion be the real deal?

Since the emergence of boxer-turned-national-hero, Manny Pacquiao, Pinoy boxing fans have been wondering whom the next Filipino boxing prospect will be to capture their hearts and minds.

Many have tried but ended in disappointment. Young Pinoy boxing prospects like Rey "Boom Boom" Bautista and AJ Banal have so far failed to live up to expectations. Bautista's career is on hiatus after a recent lost and Banal is trying to spark a comeback after he was defeated in a title match, against Donaire's opponent Rafael Concepcion.

But Bernabe Concepcion might be different.

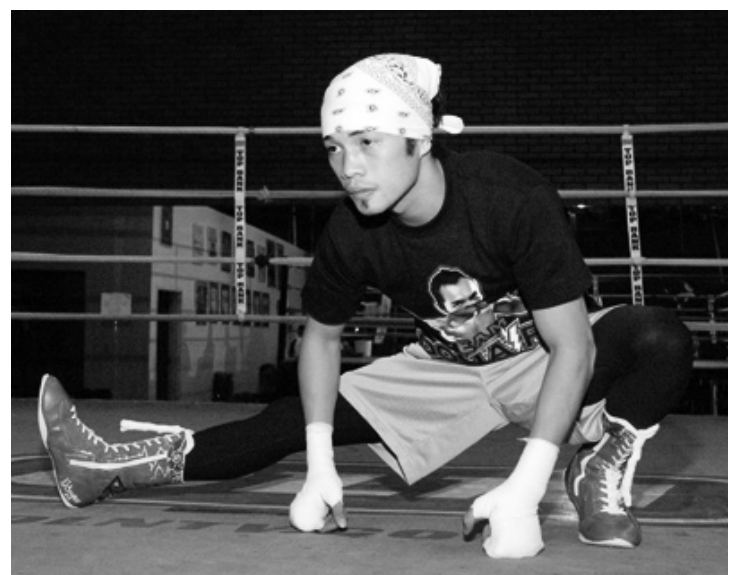
Acclaimed trainer Freddie Roach told this writer two years ago, that Bernabe was the best of the lot and future champion when he and the rest of the ALA boxing stable trained at the Wildcard more than two years ago.

Bernabe will have his chance to prove Roach right. He'll be facing off against WBO Featherweight titlist Steven Luevano as the co-main event match at the Hard Rock Casino and Resort this Saturday, August 15.

"He's ready for this fight," said Roach to the Asian Journal as he and Bernabe trained for the final time at the Wildcard before leaving to Las Vegas. "Bernabe has all the tools to beat Luevano.



Pinoy boxer Nonito Donaire at Top Rank prepares to fight for WBA world super flyweight title against Rafael Concepcion, the headline match in "Pinoy Power 2" at the Hard Rock Casino in Las Vegas on Saturday, August 15. AJPress Photos by Robert Macabagdal



The thing is we can't let him [Luevano] box us because he'll pick us apart. Bernabe has to use his power and I think he can knock him out."

It's going to be a tough fight for the 21-year-old Bernabe.

Luevano is an intelligent fighter. Despite not having the "prototypical muscular physique" like many boxers these days, his long arms and length make up for his deceptively small frame. Luevano, 28, is in the prime of his career. He boxes smart, understands his situation in the ring and can counter with the best of them. He's defended the



title four times since winning it in 2007. But Luevano does get sloppy at times. When he faced off against Terdsak Jandaeng, Luevano was in total control of that fight. He picked off Jandaeng from the outside with jabs (he set a record with most jabs landed in a featherweight fight that night) but allowed the Thai fighter to get back in the match when he left himself open. Luevano paid for it by getting knocked down.

Bernabe will have a fight in his hands this Saturday.

Bernabe knows all about Luevano. He also believes that the best way to beat the Mexican American boxer is to use slick footwork to avoid Luevano's jab and land power punches.

"You know he's a very a good boxer and puncher and technical fighter, so I just want to punch him with my left and right hand...I think I'm more powerful than him but he's a talented boxer," said Bernabe.

This fight against Luevano is going to be Bernabe's toughest challenge. On Saturday, Pinoy boxing fans will see whether Bernabe will shine in the bright lights of Las Vegas or fizzle like the other Pinoy boxing prospects before him.

Only one Las Vegas post office will be closed—Reid

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