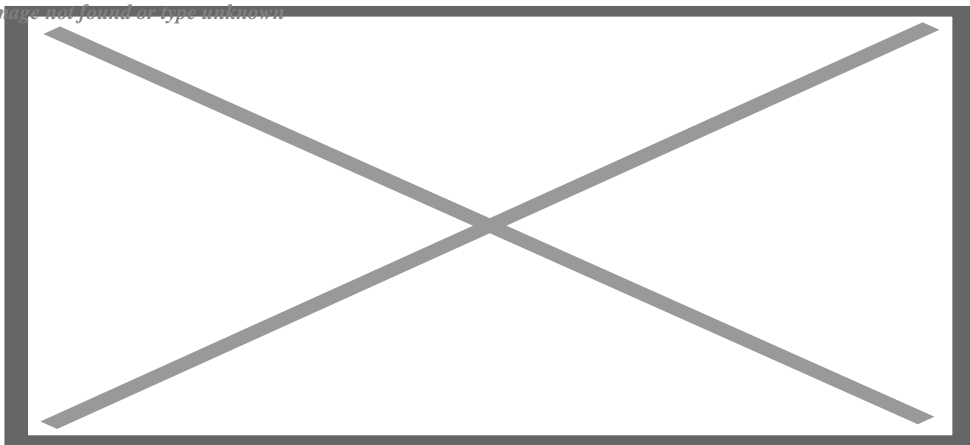


Boxing Astros confirmed for IBA's Night of Champions in Havana

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Kirill Shchekutyev

Havana, Aug 20 (RHC) - Two-time Olympic champions Julio Cesar La Cruz and Arlen Lopez will fight for belts next Tuesday in the first IBA Night of Champions in Havana, a professional card of six bouts whose prizes to the winners of the star fights amount to 120000 dollars.

This was informed on Tuesday at a press conference in Havana by the Promoter of the International Boxing Association (IBA) and in charge of the supervision of the card, Russian Kirill Shchekutyev.

La Cruz (92 kg) will fight Madiyar Saydrakhimov (Uzbekistan), while Lopez (80 kg) will face Aliaksei Alfiorau (Belarus), in 10-round fights, with bonuses of 120000 dollars for the winners and 100000 for the losers.

The historic event, the first professional fight on the island in more than 60 years, will be held at the Havana Sports City Coliseum, a venue that organizers expect to be packed with around 16,000 spectators and where the first World Boxing Championship was held in 1974.

Precisely, the IBA and the Cuban Boxing Federation will dedicate the Night of Champions to the 50th anniversary of that world championship, won by the island and in which participated fighters who later shone as Teofilo Stevenson, Puerto Rican Wilfredo Gomez and Leon Spinks (United States).

“We are sure that it will be an event that will remain in the history of Cuba and in the history of world boxing, because in the six fights there will be four Cuban Olympic champions,” added the Russian promoter.

For his part, the president of the Cuban Boxing Federation, Alberto Puig, informed that the Cuban boxers are in “good sporting shape” and warned that they continued their training the “other day” after their return from Paris-2024.

In addition to La Cruz and Lopez, the Cuban Domadores squad also includes two-time Olympic champion Roniel Iglesias (63.5), and the only Cuban boxing champion in Paris-2024, Erislandy Alvarez (also 63.5).

Cuba will be the third country in the Americas to hold a Night of Champions bout, instituted by the IBA in 2022. Previously, Mexico (Aguascalientes) and Venezuela (next Saturday in La Guaira) hosted the event.

“This event will help the interest in boxing in the world continue to grow,” added Shchekutyev and confirmed the presence in Havana of IBA president Umar Kremlev.

In addition to the bout on the 27th, on the 25th and 26th Havana will host a meeting of the IBA Executive Committee, a meeting with the presidents of the American boxing federations, a master class with 150 boxing pairs and a press conference by Kremlev.

Cuba abolished the professional sport in 1961 and resumed it in 2013, but until now no purely professional boxing card had been held on the island. Only semi-professional bouts had been held as part of the IBA World Series of Boxing.

“In the 1950s there were professional fights in Cuba, but as a team this will be for the first time. It will be a luxury program,” said Alberto Puig.

THE PROGRAMME

57 kg: Saidel Horta (CUB) vs. Ruslan Belousov (RUS)

63,5 kg: Lázaro Álvarez (CUB) vs. Mujibillo Tursonov (UZB)

63,5 kg: Erislandy Álvarez (CUB) vs. Eduardo Estela (URU)

67 kg: Roniel Iglesias (CUB) vs. Gurgen Madoyan (ARM)

80 kg: Arlen López (CUB) vs. Aliaksei Alfiorau (BLR)

92 kg: Julio César La Cruz (CUB) vs. Madiyar Saydrakhimov (UZB)

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