

'PHILLY SPECIAL' UNDERCARD FEATURES RIVERS vs. WHITLEY IN BATTLE OF UNBEATEN WELTERWEIGHT PROSPECTS FEB. 8 AT 2300 ARENA

PHILADELPHIA, PA – A rare six-round contest between a pair of unbeaten welterweight prospects—Marcel Rivers, of North Philadelphia, and Derrick Whitley, Jr., of Springfield, MA—highlights the preliminary card of Raging Babe's 'Philly Special' on Friday evening, Feb. 8, at the 2300 Arena.

Headlining the eight-fight program is an eight-round bantamweight match-up between undefeated Christian Carto, of South Philadelphia, and Victor Ruiz, of San Diego, CA. First bout is at 7.30 p.m.

Rivers, 31, has won all six of his pro fights, four by knockout. A single father, he balances boxing with a full-time, physically taxing job at Philadelphia Gas Works. Rivers, the sole caregiver for his 6-year-old son, Cameron, recently added another "why" to his quest to become a world champion. His new baby daughter, 4-month-old Jennah, provides him with new inspiration.

"I definitely have an incentive to work even harder now," said Rivers. "It's an honor to be on this card, with all the talent. A lot of these guys have backing, but I have come out of nowhere and found my way, so I appreciate the opportunity to fight on this card."

Whitley, Jr, 27, a southpaw, is unbeaten in five pro fights with one draw. He comes from a fighting family—his dad and uncle were veteran pros.

Derrick Whitley, Sr., had 52 pro fights from 1995 to 2007. Uncle Darren—twin brother of Whitley, Sr.—had 44 pro fights from 1995 to 2003. Both fought as super middleweights and light-heavyweights.

The younger Whitley trains at the family gym. He works with adults who have had brain injuries, a career he has pursued for many years. He also plays semi-pro football.

“Rivers vs. Whitley was not the easiest fight to make,” said matchmaker J Russell Peltz, “given the culture of boxing today where few fighters want to risk their spotless records at such an early stage. These two guys are different and I applaud them for it.”

In a six-round heavyweight bout on the Feb. 8 card, North Philadelphia’s Darmani Rock (13-0, 8 KOs) will look to secure his 14th win. Rock was a highly touted amateur with multiple national and international titles. He signed with Jay Z’s Roc Nation in 2016 before turning pro. Rock is trained by his father, Wayne, AKA Whiz.

The Feb. card also includes the highly anticipated professional debuts of two of Pennsylvania’s most promising amateurs in four-round fights. Heavyweight Sonny Conto, of South Philly, and bantamweight Jeremy Adorno, of Allentown, PA, announced last week that they had signed with Top Rank Boxing.

Conto, 22, was a standout baseball player at Rowan College at Gloucester County before turning his attention to boxing. He takes on Jimmy Levins, of Buffalo, NY. Jeremy Adorno, younger brother of fellow Top Rank signee Joseph Adorno, was born in Puerto Rico. He boasts an amateur record of 106-17 with multiple Silver Gloves National titles and two Ringside World titles under his belt.

Coatesville, PA, junior welterweight Gerardo Martinez (3-1, 1 KO) faces Haitian-born Osnel Charles (12-18-1, 2 KOs), of

Atlantic City NJ, who has appeared at the 2300 Arena in four of his last seven fights. This also is scheduled for four rounds.

Rounding out the card: New Hope, PA, bantamweight Alejandro Jimenez (4-0, 1 KO) vs. Edgar Cortes (6-4), of Vineland, NJ, in a six-round, bantamweight contest; Puerto Rican-born Jonathan Torres (1-0), of Bethlehem, PA, vs. Atlantic City bantamweight Dallas Holden (1-3) over four rounds.

“You have Gerardo Martinez with a 3-1 record going up against a 31-fight veteran in Osnel Charles,” said Peltz. “Or Alejandro Jimenez, at 4-0, fighting a capable 10-fight lefty in Edgar Cortes. There are times when four- and six-round fights are more appetizing than some of the so-called big fights you see on television.”

Tickets to “Philly Special” are priced \$50, \$75 and \$125. They can be purchased online at www.2300arena.com or by calling 215-765-0922. Doors open at 6:30 pm and first bout is at 7:30 pm.