

Presser Quotes & Photos: Emanuel Navarrete and Ruben Villa Ready for Featherweight World Title Showdown

LAS VEGAS (October 7, 2020) -Emanuel “Vaquero” Navarrete has won 27 consecutive bouts. Ruben Villa has never lost as a professional. Something will give Friday evening (ESPN, 10 p.m. ET), when the two battle for the vacant WBO featherweight world title, which became available after Shakur Stevenson moved up to the junior lightweight ranks.

The ESPN-televised co-feature will see Kazakh middleweight phenom Janibek Alimkhanuly against Gonzalo Coria in a 10-rounder. Undercard bouts, including middleweight prospect Lorenzo “Truck” Simpson against Sonny Duversonne and junior welterweight puncher Elvis “The Dominican Kid” Rodriguez against Cameron Krael, will stream live on ESPN+ at 7:15 p.m. ET.

Navarrete (32-1, 28 KOs) reigned as WBO junior featherweight world champion and became boxing’s most active world champion. He made five defenses of the title he won from Isaac Dogboe in a nine-month span and most recently knocked out Uriel Lopez in a June non-title bout in Mexico City.

Villa (18-0, 5 KOs), from Salinas, Calif, who is promoted by Banner Promotions and Thompson Boxing, earned this title shot with wins over the likes of Alexei Collado and Jose Enrique Vivas, but Navarrete represents a giant step up in class. Villa fights for his Salinas Valley home region, which has been ravaged by wildfires in recent months. The poor air quality has forced him to wear a mask during roadwork. The field workers are still out there, providing Villa with ample

motivation as he awaits his first world title opportunity.

At Wednesday's press conference, this is what Navarrete and Villa had to say.

Ruben Villa

"There have been a couple of restrictions and stuff due to COVID, but I've been in the gym, I've been active. It hasn't gotten in the way of me training and my team's training. Yeah, we trained hard, another hard camp, and we're ready for Friday night."

"My last couple of fights, they've been aggressive guys who come to beat me and think they're going to get me off my game plan. But I adapted well. We always had good game plans and stuck to game plans, and now we're here fighting for a world title. I feel like I'm ready. I feel like he's beatable, and my style is the one to do it."

"He's an aggressive guy who throws 100 punches a round. I feel like it's just going to bring the best out of me to do my job as well as I can."

"I feel like you're going to see a bigger and better Ruben Villa this Friday."

"Running with the mask on, seeing the field workers working during the pandemic and fires, it's just another motivation for me to win this fight and bring Salinas its first world title. I just can't wait to show you guys what I got."

"I want to see the best Ruben Villa. I haven't even seen him yet. I feel like Navarrete will bring it out of me. I'm just excited to perform and, like I said, show you guys what I got. I feel like I've been slept on. Maybe a lot of people think I don't belong here, but I'm going to show everyone I'm an elite 126 fighter. Yeah, I'm coming to win and coming to fight."

Emanuel Navarrete

“With the current situation and the camp we’ve had, {my team} has done a great job. We’ve worked through it, and we’re ready for this match.”

“My body is doing a lot better. I’m growing a little bit more. It was getting a little bit difficult making 122, but now going up to 126, I think I’m more prepared for that.”

“For now, we’re pretty much ready. We’re ready for this weight. We’re ready for this fight on Friday night, so I think we’re ready to go with what we have. After this fight, we’re going to keep moving forward.”

Use the hashtag #NavarreteVilla to join the conversation on social media.