

FED UP FEMALE BOXERS DEMAND FAIRNESS AND A PLATFORM

NEW YORK – As women continue to make strides toward equality across industries, boxing and its media partners remain in the past by disenfranchising women from a fair opportunity to showcase their skills and earn a living. In the same year that America elected its first female Vice President, a woman of color, the elite women athletes that top the world rankings have no regular television platform or boxing series. Nowhere is this unfair playing field more apparent than in the United States and North America.

The overwhelming majority of top females in boxing have not fought in 2020, or have not fought since January. The pandemic has hit women in boxing even harder than it has hit the men. The picture wasn't rosy before Covid-19 and, without action, there is no reason to believe that it will improve. This impacts all women in American boxing, from stars Claressa Shields and Amanda Serrano, to reigning world champions, to six-round and four-round fighters.

Other than a handful of athletes, most female boxers must hold down a full-time or part-time job to make ends meet. Amanda Serrano, Heather Hardy, Ava Knight and others have pursued opportunities in MMA to supplement their income and avoid inactivity. Claressa Shields, the most acclaimed woman in American amateur history, a two-time Olympic gold medalist, and a proven attraction, is presently without a platform and just announced a multi-year deal with the Professional Fighters League. The unified champion from Flint, Michigan, told The Athletic that, "It's (boxing) a sexist sport. It's sexist with the opportunities we're given. It's sexist with the TV time. It's sexist with how much we get paid. All three." It's fine for a female boxing star to try her hand at MMA. They shouldn't be compelled to do so for lack of

opportunities.

"These women consistently deliver great fights and solid viewership numbers," said Lou DiBella, who promotes more women than any other US promotional entity. "They put people in seats, and viewership of their events often rivals the men. These aren't club level fighters. They are elite world champions and, without television, without a regular platform, they can't be financially secure or build any kind of fanbase. It's remarkable that women's boxing is growing its talent pool and raising its stature, given the scarce television and streaming slots that are reserved for female fighters. This is a testament to the resiliency and dedication of boxing's female athletes, who deserve better."

Local promoters, who are in the business of growing fighters and filling seats, can offer spots on their cards and regional exposure, but purses are very limited without television revenue. Female fighters' purses are often limited to a percentage of tickets they sell out of hand. At the top levels, women are passed over. Heather Hardy, a DiBella Entertainment fighter, has seen the difference in the growth of boxers of both genders. "At press conferences, I sit at a seat at the very end, with the rest of the undercard fights," said Hardy. "I watch the boys go from sitting next to me at the end of the table, to moving up to the main card, then the co-main, and then the main event, but my seat never moved. No matter how much press I got, no matter how many fights I won, I never moved. Systemic sexism didn't allow me to move."

"It isn't like we are a separate organization like the WNBA. We are only provided with token opportunities, fighting on the same cards, often in much more competitive fights than the men, and still aren't treated fairly," said Hardy. "We have no place or professional home of our own."

"This trickles down to aspiring female boxers and the amateur programs," DiBella continued. "Young women in boxing need to

see other women on the big stage. They need to see women that look like them on television and on streaming platforms. They need to know that if they pursue a boxing career, there will be sufficient opportunities to be seen showcasing their talents, for fair wage. If women are able to headline a boxing event, or capable of selling a significant percentage of a live gate, they should not be paid ten to twenty percent of what similarly situated men are paid. We're not sending the right message here, and there's no good reason for it in the 21st century."

The pool of talent available to women in the pro ranks is smaller, but it forces the best matchups. It forces women to fight outside of their weight classes.

"Jessica McCaskill just won unified world titles, and wants to fight me at 147," said Amanda Serrano, seven-division world champion. "She called me out at 147! It's kind of sad. Good for us if it makes sense, but the truth is, they're calling out champs at 126. That is four different weight classes to go up. Men don't have to do that! Women are constantly forced to compromise ourselves just to get a chance."

The talent pool won't increase unless younger generations are inspired by women on television and streaming – women who can fight as well as, and often better than, the men who are on television now. It's time to stop asking nicely. It's time for women boxers to demand fairness and stability, and it's up to network executives, the media, and those who control access to media platforms, to stop living in the past. It's time for women in boxing to fight for themselves and for the right to earn a living. And it's now a time for action.

Use the hashtag #WeKeepFighting to follow the movement and to join the conversation on social media.

Michelle Rosado AKA Raging Babe Appears on The Last Stand Podcast with Brian Custer

PHILADELPHIA, PA/PHOENIX, AZ – Promoter Michelle Rosado appeared on The Last Stand with Brian Custer in a hard-hitting episode that dropped Tuesday.

Rosado, who is known as Raging Babe, has established herself as a top flight promoter with her successful “Philly Special” series as well as crowd pleasing fight cards in Arizona.

Rosado and Custer tackled many of the hottest topics in and around the sport of boxing.

They spoke on the business of boxing such as the importance of club shows, women’s boxing, Rosado’s start and struggles of being a female boxing promoter, being a social media boxing influencer, her goals in the sport as well her acclaimed Boxing Moms series.

Custer and Rosado also got into who are the top-five Pound-For-Pound Fighters, the division amongst the power brokers of boxing, and who is the best fighter from her hometown of Philadelphia.

PHILLY SPECIAL POSTPONED

PHILADELPHIA, PA – Raging Babe's Philly Special has been postponed again due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The event, originally set for March 27 and then rescheduled for June 19, was to feature an all-Philly main event between lightweights Stevie Ortiz and Damon Allen.

The fighters on the card have agreed to fight as soon as a date becomes available.

Greg Sirb, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania State Athletic Commission, is expected to issue guidance on Monday, and Raging Babe has dates on hold every month through the end of 2020.

"This is a tough time to be a promoter who depends on the live gate," said Michelle Rosado, Founder and Promoter at Raging Babe. "Promotional companies that have television deals are able to put on shows with no fans. The middle-class promoters, those of us who need people in seats to make the events work financially, we're out in the cold, temporarily."

Fans can expect a big payoff for the wait.

"Philly Special has all the elements of any big television card," said Rosado. "We've got Philly fighters in very competitive matches. There's a reason Philadelphia is known as a terrific fight town. These guys aren't out there to be flashy or to pad their records. Some of them have big amateur careers, some are undefeated, most have compelling stories, but nobody on the card is expecting a 'gimme.' They come to fight, and the matchups that Hall-of-Fame Matchmaker J Russell Peltz put together promise to be the kind of fights that make people fall in love with boxing. I can't wait to get the green light, and we're ready to go when that time comes."

Rosado acknowledged that the pandemic has been difficult for

some of the fighters.

“These boxers aren’t on a salary from a big-time manager or promoter,” she said. “They are in the gym every day, getting ready for their big shot. Many Philly fighters are known for working day jobs to keep afloat. We’ve got some amateur standouts who rely on this platform to showcase their skills and help their careers progress.

The most important thing is keeping the fighters safe, their families and fans safe, and all the people involved with putting on an event safe.”

AUDIO: Interview with Boxing Promoter Michelle Rosado

VIDEO: Interview with Boxing Promoter Michelle Rosado

RAGING BABE'S PHILLY SPECIAL TO AIR ON IMPACT NETWORK MARCH 27

PHILADELPHIA, PA – Raging Babe is teaming up with Impact Network to bring Philly Special to the network's audience of over 86 million homes on March 27.

The card will air live from 2300 Arena in South Philadelphia, and is headlined by an all-Philly main event: Stevie Ortiz vs. Damon Allen for Ortiz's state lightweight title and the vacant USBC lightweight title. First fight at 7:30 pm, television at 9:00 pm EST.

The network recently announced its Impact Boxing Series. Philly Special, which is promoted by Raging Babe in association with DiBella Entertainment, will be a trial run of the partnership between promoter and network.

"Impact found room in their schedule to bring Philly Special to its viewers," said Michelle Rosado, founder and Promoter at Raging Babe. "Lou [DiBella] brought them to the table. I'm grateful that he believed in the show so much, and grateful that he believed in and went to bat for me, and felt so strongly enough it needed to be televised, to make this connection. I think it's a mutually beneficial opportunity.

"For some time now, there have been no television platforms for local and regional promoters," continued Rosado. "Impact is changing that. Promoters and fighters who aren't getting opportunities on the platforms dominated by big promotional companies will get a shot, and will be seen in homes across the country.

“Stevie Ortiz vs. Damon Allen is a tremendous local match-up, and Impact will give them a chance to show they can fight and move up boxing’s food chain. It’s a win-win for boxing’s middle-class promoters, the ones not supported by hedge funds or by billion dollar television rights fees or streaming services. This is just what boxing needs.”

“Philly Special is classic, grassroots, hometown boxing, featuring competitive matchups and world class talent. It deserves a real platform and I’m thrilled that I was able to help secure Impact and its 86 million basic cable homes for my partner Raging Babe,” said Lou DiBella, President of DiBella Entertainment. “It’s been great co-promoting with Michelle, and working with Russell Peltz. I’m thrilled that Steve Marciano and IMPACT shared our enthusiasm about Philly Special and that it will be available to virtually all US boxing fans on free TV.”

“What makes Impact special is that it’s so accessible to people,” said Impact Boxing Executive Producer Steven Marciano. “When DAZN has a card, you have to have a credit card and account to watch. When Showtime has a card, you have to have premium cable to watch. All you need to watch boxing on Impact is the lowest tier cable package. We are in over 86 million homes. We’re making sure that everyone who has basic cable has access to good programming, good sports, and good boxing.

“I think calling a show a ‘club show’ is old school,” continued Marciano. “If you take the same show and put it on Showtime, it’s no longer a club show – it’s a Showtime show. Raging Babe has great fights and an excellent game plan—they just need a little more attention and a platform to showcase their events. It’s a smaller venue with limited distribution – add television and it’s a sold out show in millions of homes, not a club show.

“We’re looking forward to working with Raging Babe on this and future cards. Michelle is thorough, and gets the job done,”

said Marcano.

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Philly Special kicks off at 7:30 in the evening on Friday, March 27. TV begins at 9:00 pm. Tickets can be purchased by visiting 2300arena.com or by calling 267-273-0945

TOMMY SANTIAGO LOOKS FOR MULTI-SPORT SUCCESS AND A KIDNEY FOR DAD

PHILADELPHIA, PA – Tommy Santiago, a standout high school football star and accomplished amateur boxer, will enter the ring for his first pro fight on March 27 at 2300 Arena, and his dad will be in his corner.

To spectators, it's another father-son team, made slightly more interesting because Tommy is the second Santiago son to turn pro. Brother Milton, Jr., is an undefeated lightweight.

That Milton Sr., can walk up the steps and wave the towel for his son belies the real story – one about a father who died and was brought back to life less than a year ago, who is waiting for a life-altering call. It's a story about a mother who pulls double-duty to provide for her family and care for her husband. It's about the son, a prodigal football talent, who sacrificed his spot at a top football high school to help keep his family afloat, and now is embarking on a professional boxing career. It's a story about their past and current struggles, and the grit, determination and faith that has seen them through a slow, grinding, water torture-style drip of

pain and adversity.

A few years ago, the Santiago family had outgrown their two-bedroom home. With three teenage boys—Milton Jr., Tommy and young Nicco—they packed their home and moved into a fixer-upper in the suburbs. Milton, Sr., was a talented painter who had worked for some of the most prestigious home builders in Philadelphia.

Mom Brenda worked at a kitchen gadget manufacturing company for 20 years, where she climbed the ladder, wearing various hats and helping to provide a comfortable life for her family.

It was not long after their 2017 move that Milton Sr., began noticing he wasn't himself. Over the next few years his health would deteriorate. Once a husky, active painter and boxing coach, he shriveled away. After bouncing from doctor to hospital, he received a dual diagnosis of kidney failure and an infection that had spread to his bones. Brenda went from being a working mom to a working mom and caregiver, waking up Milton, Jr., to help carry his dad to the car at 5:30 in each morning. She'd drive him to dialysis before work, and then take an early lunch each day to get him home.

Tommy enrolled at Archbishop Wood High School, a private, Catholic school in Warminster, PA, known for its elite football program; tuition was \$9,000 per year. He was a star running back, scoring 20 touchdowns and gaining nearly 1700 yards as a Junior. His younger brother, a standout basketball player, also attended Archbishop Wood.

Wheelchair bound and unable to walk, Milton Sr., was embarrassed to go to his sons' games. Brenda had to help him get to the bathroom and clean him. Milton Jr., put his career on hold to help care for his father. It was a dark time for the family; bills were piling up as Milton Sr., got sicker.

"I was embarrassed," Milton, Sr., said of that time. "I was depressed and I kept wondering why this is happening to me and

my family.”

Last May, Milton, Sr., went in for a procedure to biopsy a growth in his lungs. When the doctor came out of the operating room and asked Brenda if she would join him in a consult room, she knew something had gone wrong. Milton, Sr., had stopped breathing for nearly two minutes during the procedure and had to be resuscitated. The doctor warned that there may be permanent brain damage.

It was an earth-shattering moment for the family.

“It was the worst moment of my life,” recalled Tommy. “When I walked in and saw my dad in the ICU, knowing he might never be the same, I just started crying. I couldn’t handle it.”

After two days in a medically induced coma, Milton, Sr., began to recover. Doctors finally found the right combination of antibiotics to begin to cure the infection that had decimated his body. Effects from the procedure continued to affect his daily life. Excruciating headaches at all hours and short term memory loss became the new normal.

After Tommy’s record-breaking Junior year, and after seeing the stress that his mother was under, Tommy made a decision. He chose to transfer to William Tennent High School—also in Warminster—cutting his family’s tuition bill in half, but virtually guaranteeing that the college offers he and his parents had dreamed of would never come.

“My mom told me she would find a way, but I didn’t want her to stress,” said Tommy.

Brenda is pained when she speaks of Tommy’s departure from Wood: “Tommy is very strong, and he’s taken a lot for the family. It’s a burden I have on me because I want to be able to give them everything. Milton’s dream was for Tommy to go to Wood – it devastated Tommy and us when he had to transfer.”

As he recovered, Milton, Sr., learned to walk again. Milton, Jr., still administers his father's dialysis five times per week for six hours and they wait to be added to the kidney donor list. Boxes of equipment line the walls of their home, and the improvements they'd planned on making to their home remain on hold.

"Milton doesn't want us to be his donor," said Brenda. "I'm the breadwinner and I can't afford to be off work. Milton doesn't want the kids to compromise their athletic careers. And after what happened when he went under in May, there's a lot of fear. So we wait."

Her voice breaks when she talks about the day they find a donor for her husband, but she doesn't mention how it would take the pressure off of her: "The day that it happens, I'll be ecstatic. He just wants to live a normal life. He wants to be able to do normal things – work, provide for his family. I will be so thankful to God that he answered our prayers."

"It would mean the world to my family to find a donor," said Tommy. "Everything he's been through, the dialysis four hours per day, three days a week... it's not easy. My mom stays up late to take care of him and gets up early the next day to go to work. She never gives up."

The example that Milton Sr., and Brenda have set – one of sacrifice, mental strength, and unbelievable love and commitment to each other and their family has been ingrained in their sons.

"Seeing all they've been through has been hard, but it makes me want to go harder," said Tommy. "I just want to be able to bring my family to the next level."

He has aspirations of being an NFL player and professional boxer, concurrently. "I have received an offer from Villanova," Tommy said. "I've applied at Temple and Penn State and plan to walk on to their football teams if I'm accepted."

But first, another fight is on the horizon. A four-round, light-heavyweight contest with Angel Vasquez, of Springfield, MA, on March 27.

“Tommy told me that the reason he likes football and boxing is that he has a hatred inside, a frustration and resentment at everything our family has been through,” said Brenda. “I feel for the kid that’s going to fight Tommy. He’s training hard, and really wants it. He really wants to go out there and do things – He wants to help the family.”

When Tommy Santiago walks out to the ring on March 27, he walks with the burden of his family’s troubles, but with his father by his side. When the bell rings, he’ll hear only his father’s voice from his corner, and a new chapter begins in the complicated and painful story of the unbreakable Santiago family.

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PHILLY SPECIAL UNDERCARD SHAPING UP TO BE A CLASSIC MARCH 27 AT 2300 ARENA

PHILADELPHIA, PA – The undercard of Raging Babe’s March 27 Philly Special is shaping up to be a classic.

With the comeback of a local favorite, a pair of Philly vs.

Philly matches, and the debut of an elite multi-sport athlete to complement the main event, the card promises to delight fight fans at the 2300 Arena in South Philadelphia.

Popular bantamweight Christian Carto, of South Philadelphia, returns in his first bout since his first loss in 18 bouts nearly 14 months ago. Carto will fight Mexico City's Roberto Pucheta in a six-round contest.

In an all-local, six-round junior lightweight fight, Coatesville's Gerardo Martinez faces a more experienced foe in West Philadelphia's Frankie Trader. Martinez, who has only one loss in six fights, works as a landscaper and personal trainer during the day, but recently has scaled back his outside work outside to focus on his boxing career. He defeated Osnel Charles in a pair of back-to-back bouts in 2019, first by majority decision, then unanimously last October.

Trader is the veteran, with a record of 13-2-1, 3 KOs. This will be Trader's first fight after aggravating a previously dislocated shoulder last June during a fight with Jerome Conquest. He would go on to finish the fight, winning an eight-round unanimous decision and showing incredible heart.

Hall-of-Fame Promoter J Russell Peltz, who is making the matches for Philly Special, sees the bout as a great style match-up.

"I told Martinez that I'm not going to sugar coat it," said Peltz. "He has to get inside, because he's not going to outbox Trader. This fight is a step-up in class for him and he's got a shot to win. Too often fighters ask what will happen to them if they lose. They need to focus more on what will happen if they win.

"On the other hand, if Trader fights the right kind of fight against a guy who walks in like Martinez, he could look like Sugar Ray Robinson. Martinez is the perfect foil if Trader gets his punches off and doesn't let Martinez get inside.

Neither guy is a big puncher – it should go the distance and be a good fight, style-wise.”

Another local attraction sees Daiyaan Butt, undefeated in five bouts, against lefty Seifullah Jihad Wise in a six-round, junior welterweight contest. Butt, 22, is young and energetic, with charisma and talent that has seen him sail through his earlier bouts. Wise, 27, who represents a step-up in competition for Butt, who is coming off a unanimous decision win over Vinnie Denierio, which followed a string of losses against undefeated boxers in their backyards.

The March 27 card also will feature the professional debut of Tommy Santiago, a standout football player at William Tennent High School, and brother of pro boxer Milton Santiago, Jr. With an amateur record of 119-2, Santiago launches his career with a goal of being a multi-sport professional athlete – a boxer who hopes to play in the NFL one day. Santiago is pursuing a college football career with a resume full of high school accolades. He will face Angel Vasquez, of Springfield, MA, in a four-round, light heavyweight bout.

Rounding out the card: super middleweights Christopher Brooker (14-7, 5 KOs), of West Philly, against Isaac Rodriguez (25-3, 20 KOs), of Brazil, now living in South Jersey, in a six-round bout; welterweight Tahmir Smalls will appear in a four-round contest.

The card is topped by the highly anticipated Philly vs. Philly match-up – Stevie Ortiz vs. Damon Allen, in a 10-round bout for Ortiz’ Pennsylvania State Lightweight Title.

The card kicks off at 7:30 in the evening on Friday, March 27. Tickets priced at \$50, \$75 and \$125 are on sale now, and can be purchased by visiting 2300arena.com or by calling 267-273-0945.

VIDEO: BOXING MOMS: EPISODE 1

STEVIE ORTIZ vs. DAMON ALLEN HEADLINES PHILLY SPECIAL MARCH 27 @ 2300 ARENA

PHILADELPHIA, PA – It should be another all-Philly classic when lightweights Stevie Ortiz and Damon Allen collide over 10 rounds for Ortiz' Pennsylvania state lightweight championship on Friday evening, March 27, at the 2300 Arena.

The Ortiz-Allen showdown will headline a seven-bout card dubbed Philly Special by Raging Babe, aka Michelle Rosado. First fight will start at 7:30 p.m.

"The recipe for success in Philly always has been Philly vs. Philly," said Rosado. "It's what made Philly a great fight town. The hard part today is getting Philly fighters to fight each other so I'm thankful that Steve Ortiz and Damon Allen bought in.

"This fight is happening at the right time for both of them. The winner can break into the world rankings."

Ortiz won the vacant state 135-pound title last year when he scored a pair of knockdowns en route to a unanimous eight-

round decision over another Philadelphian, Jeremy Cuevas, at the Met.

The 26-year-old Ortiz last boxed Sept. 20 at the Parx Casino in Bensalem, PA, when he got off the canvas twice to earn an eight-round majority decision over Alejandro Salinas, of Youngstown, OH. Scores were 75-75, 76-74, 76-74.

A pro since 2015, Ortiz is 11-0, 3 KOs, and he has boxed only two men with losing records. Ortiz is managed and trained by Chino Rivas and promoted by DiBella Entertainment.

"It's a big fight because we are both very talented," Ortiz said. "It will draw a lot of attention because of our amateur backgrounds. A lot of people always wanted to see us fight.

"As amateurs, Damon was always the top guy in his division. I was the top in my division. We went to the National Golden Gloves together and we fought great fights. This match-up is going to bring the best out of us."

"This is a great opportunity for Stevie Ortiz in a hometown, Philly Special main event against Damon Allen," said Lou DiBella, President of DiBella Entertainment. "This is reminiscent of the great Philly fights of old. The card is stacked and will be a great representation of Philly boxing and the best of local shows. I look forward to working with Raging Babe to secure a television or streaming partner for the March 27 Philly Special. Philly Special will be special and I can't wait for fans to see it."

Allen, 27, last boxed Oct. 25 at the 2300 Arena when he scored a unanimous six-round decision over Dieumerici Nzau, of Silver Spring, MD. That marked Allen's first fight in his hometown in more than four years.

A pro since 2013, Allen is 16-1-1, 5 KOs. He owns a pair of victories over Mexican veterans Gamaliel Diaz and Martin Honorio.

Allen is managed by Tim VanNewhouse and David McWater, and he is trained by Brian McIntyre.

"I never wanted to be the best in the city; I want to be the best period," Allen said. "I know he's looking at it like it's a big fight. This isn't my first rodeo in a fight like this. I know what to bring and what not to bring. My mind is straight. He is going to be game.

"I have more experience in and out of the ring. He's just another fighter in front of me. I live a boxing lifestyle. I told him to 'come ready and prepared' because I'm coming 110 percent."

Philly Special is promoted by Raging Babe, in association with DiBella Entertainment. Hall-of-Fame promoter, Russell Peltz will handle the matchmaking duties.

Six preliminary fights open the card, which kicks off at 7:30 in the evening on March 27. Tickets priced at \$50, \$75 and \$125 go on sale Friday at noon, and can be purchased by visiting 2300arena.com or by calling 267-273-0945.