



Middleweight Ricardo Mayorga, left, from Nicaragua, reacts to a right cross from Puerto Rico's Felix Trinidad during the Saturday bout at New York's Madison Square Garden. Trinidad knocked out Mayorga to win the WBANA & NABC middleweight championships.

Trinidad back, looking for Hopkins rematch

NEW YORK (AP) - Felix Trinidad doesn't believe in tuneup fights. His comeback after more than two years of retirement was a doozy, and now he wants the biggest name out there, Bernard Hopkins.

After Trinidad knocked out Ricardo Mayorga in the eighth round Saturday night, completing a scintillating performance before a raucous crowd, he turned his attention to the only man who has beaten him.

Hopkins knocked out Trinidad in the 12th round three years ago for the middleweight title. Trinidad fought once more but, unable to secure a rematch, he left boxing.

Now he's back, and he's looking for Hopkins.

"At that moment when I retired," Trinidad said, "there wasn't a big fight for me that I wanted and there was nothing in boxing that I wanted. I want a big fight now. My goal is to make big fights, and then I will leave happy and win them all."

Trinidad's father and trainer/manager, known as Papa, said he will talk with promoter Don King. Trinidad is signed for one more fight with HBO, which handled the Mayorga bout on a pay-per-view basis. But King also said he felt HBO didn't promote Saturday's fight properly — even though Madison Square Garden grossed \$4.65 million on site, the third-biggest gate the arena has had for a fight.

Papa Trinidad took a shot at Hopkins, who was roundly booed by the pro-Trinidad crowd when Hopkins entered

the building before the bout.

"In the past, every great champion that lost had the opportunity to avenge his defeats," Papa said. "Bernard Hopkins said immediately after that fight he'd give a rematch ... and then he stepped back and he never gave a rematch to Tito."

Hopkins told ESPN Radio that he would consider another fight with Trinidad and that HBO had reserved Jan. 20 for his 20th title defense. More likely, Hopkins will face Felix Sturm in that bout and any Hopkins-Trinidad matchup wouldn't come until spring.

Meanwhile, Trinidad will build on his memorable comeback bout. With the crowd chanting "Tito, Tito" hours before he entered the ring, he gave the fans — many of them waving Puerto Rican flags — exactly what they came for.

Trinidad, 42-1, was a bit tentative in the first two minutes against Mayorga, who had never been knocked down. But once he got into the flow, Trinidad looked like

a fighter in his prime, not one coming off more than a two-year layoff.

Mayorga did knock down Trinidad in the third round, but it resembled a slip and Trinidad was back up before referee Steve Smoger began counting.

After a brutal fourth round in which both middleweights stood toe-to-toe and exchanged powerful punches, Mayorga was cut under the left eye in the fifth round. He had to stop from a low blow to the right thigh in the sixth, and Smoger allowed him nearly two minutes to recover with 40 seconds to go in the sixth. But Mayorga never was the same the rest of the way. He went down three times in the eighth as Trinidad kept up his relentless attack.

Mayorga fell to 26-5-1. The Nicaraguan heads back to his home country to face a rape charge in court Wednesday.

Trinidad, meanwhile, said he's ready for "easy fights for big money." Perhaps, but any Hopkins fight, while for lots of money, won't be easy.

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