

Want shot at Pacman? Beat Valero first

by ABAC CORDERO
Philstar.com

BEAT Edwin Valero and get to face Manny Pacquiao a third time.

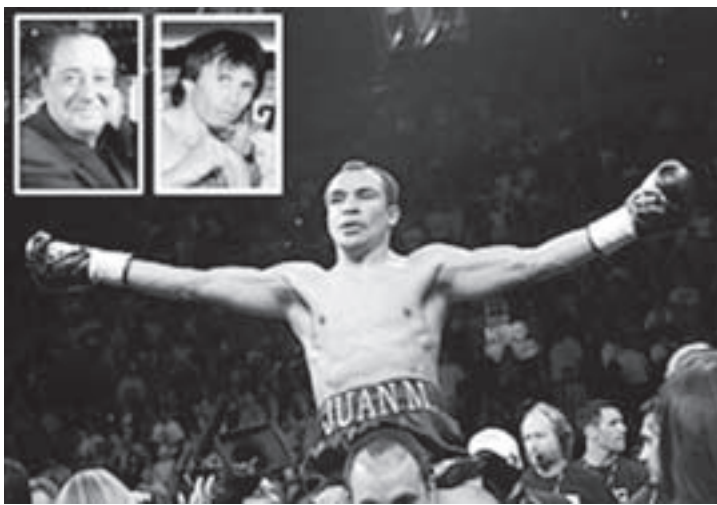
This was the challenge hurled by master promoter Bob Arum to Juan Manuel Marquez, the current WBA and WBO lightweight champion who is dying to face Pacquiao a third time.

Valero, the sensational knockout artist from Venezuela, won the vacant WBC lightweight crown, the one that Pacquiao took from David Diaz last July, with a big win in Texas last Sunday, April 5.

Valero knocked out Antonio Pitalua in the second round, and has now won all his 25 fights by way of knockout, the first 18 of them coming in the first round.

It was the first time Arum saw Valero fight in person, and shortly after the match, the 77-year-old promoter, according to fighthype.com, declared him as the "best lightweight" out there.

Right after Pacquiao defeated Diaz, the Filipino superstar said it could be his first and last fight at 135 lbs because he'd rather



WBA and WBO lightweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez's bid for a third showdown with Manny Pacquiao hinges on a duel with Edwin Valero (right, inset) as proposed by Top Rank's chief Bob Arum. Photo courtesy of Philstar.com

fight his last few fights at a higher class.

A few months ago, he relinquished the WBC lightweight crown, and now Valero is the new champion.

Arum also wants Valero, who's now under Top Rank, to fight Pacquiao, and daring Marquez to face the Venezuelan may be a ploy that will help them determine if Valero is for real.

If the Marquez-Valero fight happens, the winner may get to face Pacquiao, especially if a Pacquiao-Floyd Mayweather Jr. showdown doesn't take place later this year.

Pacquiao faces Ricky Hatton for the latter's IBO light-welterweight (140 lbs) title on May 2. And in case, just in case, he fails, a fight with either Marquez or Valero at 135 lbs should serve as a fallback. ■

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