

Promoter sues rival, boxer over rights to cable TV deal

by Steve Plunkett
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A Miami boxing promoter is picking a legal fight with Top Rank Inc., claiming a much larger, Las Vegas-based rival ignored its "exclusive" rights to arrange champion Guillermo Rigondeaux's bouts and signed him to a Sept. 15 pay-per-view match on HBO.

In a lawsuit filed Aug. 16 in Miami-Dade Circuit Court, Caribe Promotions Inc. claims Top Rank "wrongfully and intentionally" excluded the company from its negotiations with Rigondeaux, the World Boxing Association's super bantamweight titleholder. Caribe seeks an injunction to stop the fight, said its attorney, Jared Lopez of Black, Srebnick, Kornspan & Stumpf in Miami.



Lopez

Lopez called Rigondeaux's scheduled opponent, Roberto Marroquin, a "lesser" boxer.

"If Mr. Rigondeaux loses the fight, his value going forward will be greatly diminished," Lopez said.

Rigondeaux, a two-time Olympic gold-medal champion who defected from Cuba in 2009, signed a contract the same year giving Caribe "sole, worldwide and exclusive rights"

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS

Guillermo Rigondeaux

Residence: Miami
Age: 31
Height: 5-foot-4½
Record: 10-0 (8 knockouts)

Roberto Marroquin

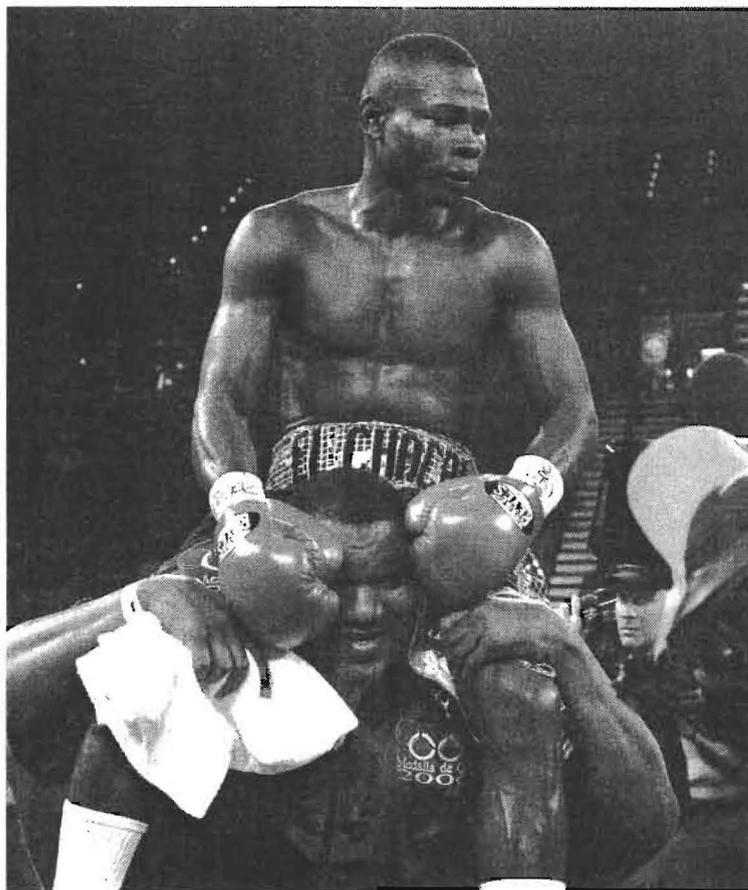
Residence: Dallas
Age: 22
Height: 5-foot-8
Record: 22-1 (15 knockouts)

Source: BoxRec.com

to arrange all his professional bouts, according to the complaint, which alleges breach of contract by the fighter and tortious interference by Top Rank. The contract had a three-year term with an automatic three-year renewal.

In 2010, Caribe, Top Rank and Rigondeaux reached a promotional agreement, the suit said. After the pact expired in July, Top Rank started negotiations with the fighter for a long-term contract.

Lopez said Rigondeaux was promised a purse of \$175,000 for the Marroquin bout but fears the boxer, also known as "El Chacal" or "The Jackal," was not told about other promoters' long-term interest in him. Los Angeles-based Golden Boy Promotions Inc. and other firms "were offering deals well in excess of \$1 million," Lopez said.



JULIE JACOBSON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A Miami boxing promoter is suing big-name rival Top Rank after being excluded from negotiations with super bantamweight titleholder Guillermo Rigondeaux for an HBO pay-per-view deal.

"Top Rank founder and CEO Bob Arum "was one of the first promoters to harness the power of closed-circuit and pay-per-view models of selling televised fights," the company's website said. A man at the promoter's Nevada headquarters who said

he is a lawyer said Top Rank had no comment on the lawsuit. He declined to identify himself.

MANAGEMENT BEEF

Separately, Rigondeaux's Irish-based manager, Gary Hyde, on Aug. 10 asked the

onthe web
Read the complaint on
DailyBusiness Review.com

Circuit Court to enforce and extend an injunction that keeps the boxer from having any other manager.

Under Hyde's oversight, Rigondeaux rose from No. 7 in his weight division to No. 1, triggering an extension of the management agreement, said the complaint filed by William J. Brown of William J. Brown P.A. in Miami.

"Rigondeaux, however, has recently refused to acknowledge the automatic two-year extension of the term of the agreement and refuses to contact or cooperate with Hyde," the complaint said.

Rigondeaux's lawyer, Guy Spiegelman of Miami, said the boxer will "vigorously" contest the injunction request.

"The case has long been closed," said Spiegelman, who filed a motion to strike the complaint.

The motion is set for a hearing Tuesday before Circuit Judge David Miller, Spiegelman said.

The Rigondeaux-Marroquin bout is on the undercard headlined by middleweight champion Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. v. Sergio Martinez.

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