

Can Edgar Berlanga still be boxing's face of Puerto Rico?

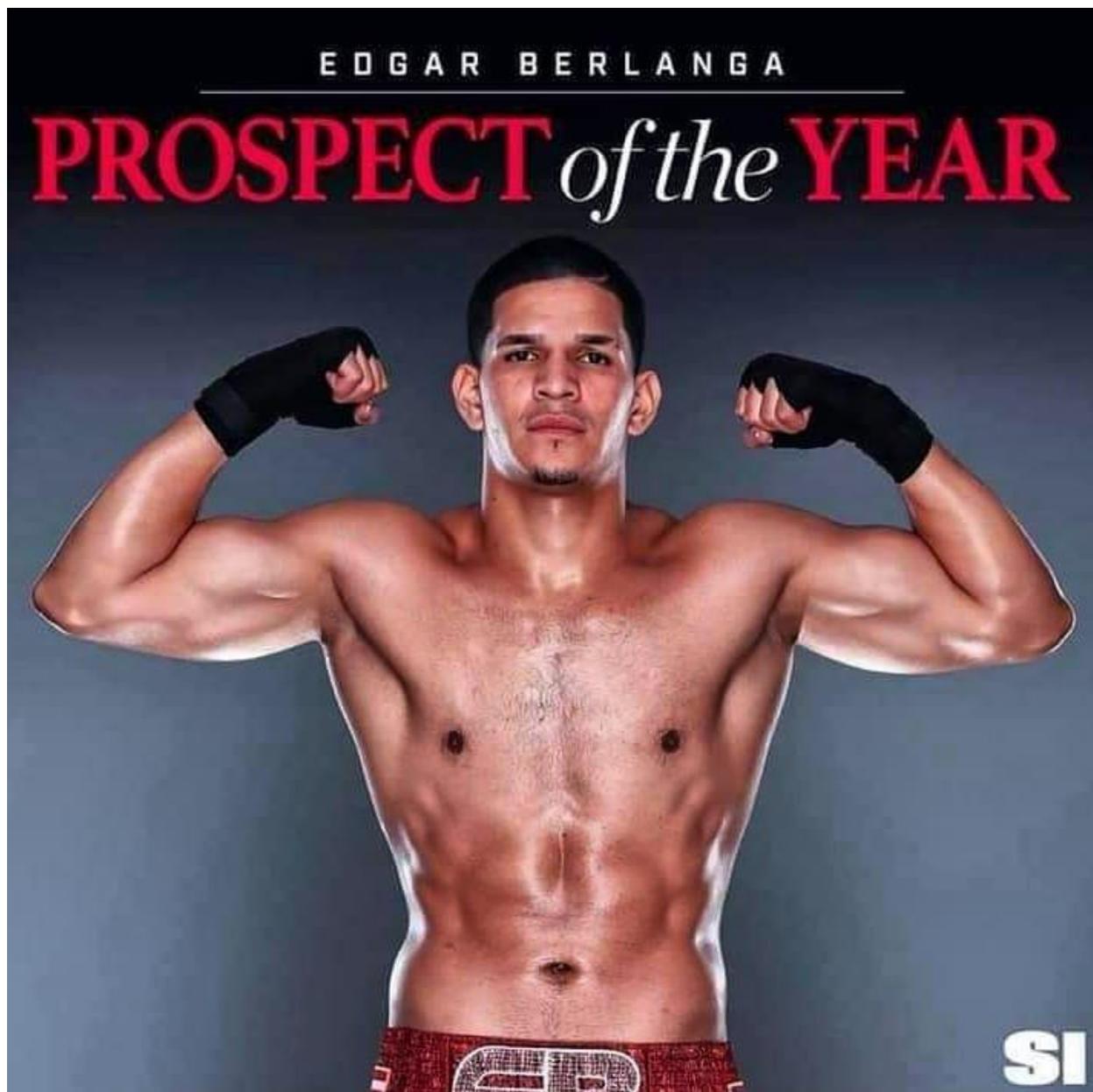
Berlanga's future is cloudy

By Michael Gonzalez | April 30th, 2024 | 5:00 PM EST



Once known to be boxing's top prospect and the future face of Puerto Rican boxing, now considered to fans as the embarrassment of the sport, Edgar Berlanga has had a lot of ups and downs in his young career.

Edgar Berlanga who made his Top Rank debut in April 2019, made his name known in the media by going on a 16-fight knockout streak, with all his wins in the first round. He was named boxing's top prospect in 2020 by several top publications, including Sports Illustrated. In 2021 Berlanga won his first professional boxing championship, The North American Boxing Organization Super-Middleweight Championship.



Even though he won a championship, things weren't going as planned for Berlanga. From 2021 through 2023 Edgar Berlanga could not get a knockout victory. All of his fights were being won by a close struggle unanimous decision victory. In June of 2022 Berlanga fought 38-year-old Roamer Alexis Angulo. After the fight, people were comparing Berlanga to Mike Tyson again, but for the wrong reasons. In the seventh round of the fight, Berlanga decided to [bite Angulo](#). Berlanga still ended up with the win, but at what cost? He ended up getting his boxing license revoked and would not see the boxing ring again until a whole year later.

Fans around the world and even in Puerto Rico started to turn on the once top prospect. Instead, the Puerto Rican fans, and Top Rank decided to move their focus to another top prospect in boxing. His name is Xander Zayas. Zayas at just 16-years-old became the youngest signing in Top Rank history. To fans, he is everything Berlanga is not. He is humble, discipline, and not a dirty fighter. Zayas is only 21 years old and is now one of the biggest prospects in the world.



In January 2023, Edgar Berlanga and Boxing promotion Top Rank decided to go their separate ways. In February of 2023, Berlanga signed a deal with promoter Eddie Hearn and Matchroom boxing. “My goal is to land the Canelo fight and renew the greatest rivalry in boxing – Mexico vs Puerto Rico,” says the motivated Berlanga. Everything seems to be going uphill for Berlanga now as he won his first match in Matchroom Boxing in a dominant TKO victory against Pdraig McCrory. In the post-fight interview, he reiterates that he wants to fight Canelo Alvarez now and that it will happen very soon.



Canelo is considered the face of the whole sport of boxing right now and it has been that way for more than a few years. If Berlanga ends up fighting Canelo and maybe even beat him, there is no doubt that Berlanga will step out of any shadow of Xander Zayas and any controversy that he was in previously and will be in the running again as boxing's next face of Puerto Rico.

To boxing fans, there can only be one face for each nationality every generation. Puerto Rico is a treasure to all boxing fans as they have produced some of the finest boxers in the world. Can Berlanga step out of the Xander's shadow? Can Berlanga fill the shoes of the past faces of Puerto Rican boxing like legends Miguel Cotto and Felix "Tito" Trinidad? Can Berlanga win the fans over after his biting incident and weak decision victories? Time will only tell.

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