

Siberian Rocky' Provodnikov promises more of what fans love in Monte Carlo debut

Johannesburg, October 27 – Former world champion Ruslan Provodnikov (24-4, 17 KOs) says he will be in great shape for next weekend's showdown with Jesus Alvarez Rodriguez (13-0, 10 KOs) in Monte Carlo as he was in training for a fight in New York at the same time.

Those plans changed, though, because "six or seven opponents changed their mind about fighting me". They include Amir Khan and Shawn Porter.

The Russian's in-your-face style makes him a tough fight for anyone and it's little surprise that many big names have balked at the chance to challenge him.

"It's frustrating, but we will persevere," he said from his base in Indio, California where he is working with new trainer Joel Diaz, former trainer of Provodnikov rival Timothy Bradley.

Asked what sort of fight Monte Carlo fans can expect next weekend, the Banner Promotions boxer unsurprisingly pointed to his reputation saying he had been in two fights of the year candidates, plus the fight of the year with Bradley in 2013.

"Right now, the goal is to become world champion again. Being in America has made me a better fighter," said the 31-year-old who grew up admiring Mike Tyson. "If you are a star in the USA then you are a star all over the world. Plus the competition level in the US is at its highest."

Having grown up in western Siberia, he attributes the emergence of Eastern Bloc fighters like himself, Gennady

Golovkin, Artur Beterbiev and so many others to the challenges thrown down by Soviet history.

“There have been some tough times that really made people very hard-working and persistent in whatever they do,” said the man they call the “Siberian Rocky”.

Provodnikov is looking forward to following in the footsteps of Golovkin, who has twice fought in the principality to much acclaim.

“I’ve never been there, but I’ve heard it’s one of the most beautiful places in the world. I know Gennady enjoyed it every time. I can’t wait to see how many fans I have over there.”

As ever, the Russian expects to put on a good show. “I’ve seen Rodriguez’s fights. He is a very strong fighter, and unbeaten. This will be a brawl.”

His fans, of course, wouldn’t want it any other way.

Online reservations: <http://www.montecarloboxingbonanza.com/>

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