



ROMAN GONZALEZ -- BRIAN VILORIA

International Media Conference Call Transcript

**Consensus Pound-For-Pound King and WBC Flyweight Champion Roman “Chocolatito” Gonzalez from Costa Rica Training Camp;
Four-Time World Champion Brian “Hawaiian Punch” Viloria from Los Angeles Camp;
Respective Managers Carlos Blandon and Gary Gittelsohn;
And K2 Promotions’ Tom Loeffler
Tuesday, September 29, 2015**

Tom Loeffler: We are really excited about this upcoming event. We have gotten a tremendous reaction from both the media and the fans, especially the local media in New York. We are seeing Roman back in the States and it will be his first time fighting at Madison Square Garden. The tickets sales are very strong in anticipation of this event. It’s a large international event and will be telecast on Box Nation in the UK, WOWOW in Japan, in Nicaragua where Roman is from, Sat 1 in Germany, Polsat in Poland and in the Philippines, over 120 countries in total. This is a very strong WBC championship fight in the flyweight division and Roman was just announced as the consensus pound-for-pound fighter and I know a lot of people are looking forward to seeing him back in the ring and when he is fighting a guy like Brian Viloria who is a four-time world champion in two different divisions. We need to thank a lot of people that made this fight happen – Mr. Honda of Teiken Promotions, Viloria’s manager Gary Gittelsohn and Carlos Blandon the manager of Roman Gonzalez.

These are the type of warriors looking to show their skills in the ring.

Roman “Chocolatito” Gonzalez: I want to thank God and I want to thank Teiken Promotions, HBO, K2 and everyone else that has made this possible. I am ready for October 17.

Roman, you have been voted by numerous outlets to be the No. 1 pound-for-pound fighter – your reaction? And does it add pressure?

Roman “Chocolatito” Gonzalez: I am very happy about being voted the No. 1 pound-for-pound. I would like to thank my team because I believe it is a team effort and all of the work has paid off. It does not bring any pressure – it just brings motivation.

What is it the feeling to be where you are now as the No. 1 fighter in the world compared to where you came from?

Roman “Chocolatito” Gonzalez: When I go back I would never have imagined that I could be No.1 pound-for-pound fighter or have won three world championships. I have taken care of myself. That is one of the great lessons I have learned. I am looking forward to October 17 to demonstrate my talent and be victorious once again.

Viloria is a tough opponent – how do you feel about fighting someone at this top level – the toughest you have fought in a few fights?

Roman “Chocolatito” Gonzalez: I know that Brian Viloria is an excellent champion and he is a great fighter. He is a tough opponent and it will be a hard fight. I have my arsenal and he has his arsenal and whoever is in the best physical condition on October 17 is going to win the fight.

Roman, you are the first at your weight to be No. 1 – does that make it even more special?

Roman “Chocolatito” Gonzalez: It definitely makes it a lot more special and I would like to thank the *Bible of Boxing* among others for taking me into consideration. I thank God because without him I would not be able to be where I am at today.

Carbajal was the first at that weight to break into the top five, then Ricardo Lopez was in the top 5, and Mark Johnson – does you remember any of those?

Roman “Chocolatito” Gonzalez: Ricardo Finito Lopez is the one that sticks out for me the most – the way he boxed.

I know Alexis Arguello is your mentor and I don't think he was ever pound-for-pound, but how does would he feel about this?

Roman “Chocolatito” Gonzalez: I believe that Alexis Arguello would be the happiest out of all of my team, because he had a lot of trust in me and treated me like his son. He would not only be so happy to see me as the pound-for-pound No. 1 but to also have won three world championships. Out of the whole team he would be the happiest with my accomplishments.

Are there any other fighters out there you are looking to fight and what would be the super fight?

Roman “Chocolatito” Gonzalez: I would like to have a rematch with Estrada, which I think would be a very good, fight but right now I am focused on Brian Viloria on October 17.

How important is it for you to put on a good show at Madison Square Garden for the fans in the USA?

Roman “Chocolatito” Gonzalez: I am so happy with MSG and HBO that they are giving me this opportunity to fight where a lot of great champions have fought.

Has Viloria been on your radar in the past couple of years since you have been hovering around the same weight class?

Roman “Chocolatito” Gonzalez: As a matter of fact, after I fought Estrada, I was told the winner of our fight would fight the winner of Viloria-Tyson Marquez fight, but then Viloria decided to fight Estrada. That was the only time that Viloria's name was mentioned as an opponent on my radar until this fight on October 17.

How difficult do you think it will be to get other top fighters in the ring with you?

Roman “Chocolatito” Gonzalez: It definitely motivates me to be able to fight at Madison Square Garden and HBO is giving me the opportunity. And I need to perform well so that HBO continues to give me the opportunity to fight the best fighters. But not just me – I hope that other fighters in my weight class can get, from HBO, the same opportunity.

How was the negotiation process for the first Estrada fight and do you think it will be tougher to negotiate the second time around?

Carlos Bandon: The first time that Roman Gonzalez fought Estrada, he was under different management (PRODESA), who had a good relationship with Fernando Beltran of Zanfer Promotions, and at the time Estrada had just avenged his only loss at that time against Sanchez and won the Azteca title, so when they offered him the fight at 108lb. he accepted with ease because it was his first world title shot. Now it's different because it is going to be a unification of titles and there is a lot more on the line, they both have bigger names and they have more exposure so negotiations will be a little bit harder. Under my management if Zanfer wants a shot at Gonzalez they have to come up with an offer that is worthy of both fighters, which are great champions.

How important is it to have two of the best boxers in the world fighting on the same card?

Tom Loeffler: It's very important and one of the few and rare occasions when you have the top two fighters in boxing fighting on the same show and that's why we have seen such a great reaction from the fans and the media. I just want to reiterate – Roman is one of the only fighters that could outshine GGG, like he did at the Forum where his performance was so outstanding and impressive that it got everyone talking about it. We are excited about having him back and it's a great combination having two world title fights like this, Gennady defending his titles – unifying with a big puncher like IBF Champion David Lemieux and then Roman defending his title against a proven champion like Brian Viloria, it's a tremendous event.

Do you think it will do 1 million pay-per-views or more?

Tom Loeffler: I think we are pretty conservative on our end, with ticket sales you can see everyone is very excited about the event. None of the fighters have been on HBO pay-per-view before so this is really us trying to make this event work. We will be happy with the success on pay-per-view and I think it opens a lot of doors for all the fighters featured on the show.

Brian “Hawaiian Punch” Viloria joining the call...

Tom Loeffler: Brian Viloria brings additional international flavor to the promotion with a strong Filipino following. He is a four-time world champion and we are very excited about the match-up between Brian Viloria and Roman Gonzalez.

Gary Gittelsohn: As Brian's manager I would like to say how grateful we are to be part of this event. Having been around boxing for quite a while I know there is no bigger stage than Madison Square Garden and no bigger platform than HBO Pay-Per-View. It's a rare combination that showcases the little giants of the sport despite my efforts over the years to get recognition for them. I never understood the corporate bias against the smaller weights especially because traditionally the lighter weights are the most talent laden. If you ask any matchmaker, there are no bums occupying the lower weight classes. And any of those guys on any given day can become a champion. But this fight is special – it matches the two most compelling flyweights in the world. I can't personally remember a match-up of this magnitude since Gonzalez-Carbajal – and that's really saying something. I'm sure of one thing, after this fight the flyweights will not have to come begging to the premium cable networks to get airtime.

Let me say a few words about Brian Viloria. There is a certain axiom that says 'never fall in love with a fighter, because he'll eventually break your heart.' I'm here to tell you that hasn't been my experience. I love Brian Viloria and when you get to know him you'll love him too. He has the soul of a champion. He is strong and skilled, he's competitive, he's self-confident, he's composed and for

this fight especially, he is very focused. Brian has been boxing for most of his life and inside the ring is where he is most comfortable. I am delighted to tell you that Brian's preparation for October 17 has been smooth and there have been no hiccups whatsoever. His sparring has been tremendous. He has had a terrific mix of sparring partners. As a fan I have never been as excited about a co-feature on a Pay-Per-View card as I am about this fight.

Brian "Hawaiian Punch" Vilorio: Good morning everyone and thanks for joining us on this call. I have been preparing myself very, very hard for this fight. I have never been this focused compared to any fight I have had in the past. This training camp is one of my best training camps, only because I know the type of challenge I am going to be facing on October 17. I am facing the No. 1 pound-for-pound fighter in the world – the best fighter in the world – and I do not want to leave any stone unturned going into this fight. I want to be in the best shape of my life. I want to be 100% focused mentally and physically for this fight. I think I have a lot to show, that I am still one of the best fighters out there, in the world, and there is no better place to showcase that than on HBO Pay-Per-View. I thank you guys for giving me this opportunity and Tom Loeffler, for having me fight in New York City at Madison Square Garden.

Do you see any weaknesses in his game that you can exploit?

Brian "Hawaiian Punch" Vilorio: I have been watching tapes endlessly during training camp for this fight. He does a lot of things correctly. I think, not to give too much away in terms of strategy, I just need to come in shape and prepare in the gym, and be able to fight the 12th round like I am fighting the first round, and just let my hands go. I don't think Chocolatito has ever fought a guy that can hit as hard as me and I'm a bit faster than anyone he has ever fought. I think I possess a little bit of a challenge for Chocolatito in this fight. I have the experience. I've been in big battles in fights and I don't think Chocolatito has ever fought a guy like me and I think all I need to do is come into the fight with a straight head and just let my hands go. I don't think I could have trained any harder than I have and I am just ready – ready to go.

Tom, does GGG's camp acknowledge that Chocolatito is No. 1?

Tom Loeffler: Gennady doesn't get caught up in the ratings, he just wants to prove he's the best middleweight. We are definitely excited that both Roman and Gennady are at the top of the polls. I think it was a consensus of whether it was going to be Chocolatito or Gennady, and having both of those fighters on the same show and I'm sure Brian has something to say about that. When I was discussing making the fight with Gary, there was no hesitation at all from Brian's side. Brian is very excited for this challenge and both fights will be electric and non-stop action. So to answer your question, as far as the ratings, I think it is a poll that Gennady would like to be rated No. 1 but he is excited to be where he is right now in the sport.

Do you feel that this is a great time for the flyweight division, where you have been for a long time?

Brian "Hawaiian Punch" Vilorio: Yes, it's been a long time. I remember there were a couple of fights where I thought it was worthy of being on the networks. The Marquez fights were back-to-back battles – a lot of people enjoyed that fight and I still get a lot of comments about that fight from fight fans and people on the street come up to me and say 'that fight was amazing.' Finally we are able to showcase what fans that enjoy the lighter weight divisions have been watching. This is a bigger stage and I'm really proud to be able to showcase my talents and I know Roman Gonzalez is really excited. It also takes two to tango. You can't just have one big name – you need another big name – and in this case Roman is the big fish and everyone wants to see him fight. I'm also going to give him a big challenge. I think for the past couple of years a lot of people have been missing out on some great fights in the lower weight divisions for a long time now and finally thank you to everyone who is

giving me this opportunity to fight on HBO and to showcase to the world what they have been missing out on for the past couple of years.

You came out with the big group that had so much promise, from the 2000 Olympics, and here we are, 15 years later and you are the last one going – not only just boxing but fighting at a world championship level.

Brian “Hawaiian Punch” Vilorio: I miss those guys – Jeff Lacy had a great run. Jermaine Taylor, Rocky Juarez...some of those guys I look back and they had tremendous talent. That team was stacked and anyone of us could have been a world champion – and some did become world champions and some of us didn't. A lot of the credit goes to how I live my life outside of the boxing ring. I try to take care of myself not only during training camp but when I have free time I try to keep myself in shape and try to lead a healthy life and that's what I credit my longevity in this sport to. A lot of my friends are either retired or doing other things. My passion is boxing and I have been born to do this. I feel like I have a lot more to give in this sport, there is a lot left in the tank and I just love doing this and I want to continue doing this until I have to hang up the gloves. Right now I am just trying to take it one fight at a time and I am just going to try and give it as much as I can on October 17 and give it my all and leave everything in the ring just to show everybody who I am and what I do in terms of being an action fighter and being a great fighter.

You lost to Estrada and he beat Estrada – does that have any bearing in your opinion on the way this fight may go?

Brian “Hawaiian Punch” Vilorio: I think styles make fights. Estrada does have a difficult style and strategy. Each fight is different and I know this fight is going to be hard too but I think I have what it takes to overcome a fighter like Roman Gonzalez. It doesn't matter what happened in the past I think I fought the wrong fight when I lost to him. I don't think I was in as great shape as I am now and as mentally focused as I am now for this fight against Gonzalez. This is going to be a totally different fight than what happened in the fight against Estrada.

You have been one of the best fighters in the lower weight class for some time – had some great fights and some setbacks. Do you think a win here will cement you as one of the best fighters of this generation?

Brian “Hawaiian Punch” Vilorio: I am just going to go into this fight with an open mind. I am going to try and enjoy myself and not only get the win but try to take it in as much as I can. I am having a great training camp. I have never been so ready, in a long time, as I am now looking back to all of my other training camps. I am so focused and so pumped for this fight and I think all of the hard work is going to show on October 17. I know I have what it takes to win and I hope I come out with a W. I have so much confidence in myself for this fight. Whatever happens happens. I am going to go into to this fight and do what I have to do and try and do as much as I can to pull out that win. Cementing my legacy doesn't matter I just want to come out with the win – just give it my all on October 17.

Have you fought anyone with a similar style to Roman Gonzalez?

Brian “Hawaiian Punch” Vilorio: I haven't fought Roman yet so I could only answer that after I fight him then try to compare style-wise. By the looks of it, Roman is a great fighter and has a great style. I don't know if he has the punching power or the ability to take punches but we will see and after October 17 then we can compare.

To what do you attribute this new attention to the lower weight classes?

Gary Gittelsohn: I think the answer is self-evident. Roman Gonzalez has sort of catapulted onto the scene and captured peoples' attention. With ascendancy – we all embrace it because a rising tide is great for the sport in general and for the lightweight divisions. People are captivated by heavyweights over time but there has been a dearth of heavyweights with the exception of the Klitschko's who for many years have fought mostly in Germany and off of HBO. So the sport in general was rudderless after Mike Tyson and Lennox Lewis. But when you have someone who has become as romanticized as much as Chocolatito who has now become in most peoples' minds the No. 1 pound-for-pound fighter and you have someone who has a good a reputation as Brian Vitoria, who has been laboring in the trenches for many years begging to get on the networks we finally have the sun, the moon and the stars all aligned. I am hoping and expecting that this fight will not let anyone down. You can never choreograph how a fight goes, but this is one that I will bet my last dollar on will meet all expectations and likely exceed them.

Brian “Hawaiian Punch” Vitoria: I can never figure out why our division has never been looked on the same way as the higher weights and the middleweight divisions but I can assure you that come October 17, a lot of people will figure out why they have not paid a lot of attention to it only because we are going to show a great fight. You are going to see two warriors go at it. It is going to epitomize boxing as what it is. It is a great time to be in the lighter weight divisions. They took a leap of faith with us and we are not going to disappoint, I promise.

Did you see the Tyson fight over the weekend?

Brian “Hawaiian Punch” Vitoria: I did not get a chance to watch it. I am heavily into training and I also have a son that I try to take care of who I spend all of my free time with and I enjoy that a lot. My main focus right now is Roman Gonzalez and training for him and training really hard for him.

What have you done to correct some of the flaws that have led to your losses?

Brian “Hawaiian Punch” Vitoria: When I look back at it I don't think I took some of those fights so seriously as I should have. There were circumstance I got myself into. I didn't give my all into training camps. There were times I thought I could have done a lot more, pushed myself a little more extra. For this camp I pulled out all the stops. I eat, live and breathe Roman Gonzalez right now and I think I've done that for the last couple of fights now compared to the fights that I have lost. Whenever I am faced with the challenge such as October 17, I always push myself extra hard and for the fights that I lost I didn't give that type of push. I think that's the difference.

When the fight was offered what made you think this is the right time for this guy?

Brian “Hawaiian Punch” Vitoria: I think it is my time. My last three fights ended in knockouts. When I lost my fight to Estrada I always want to get back on the horse again and Roman is the type of fighter that will propel me and my legacy to where I want to be. Now that he is the No. 1 pound-for-pound fighter in the world I think beating him will also cement my legacy. Not is the time to do it. I am getting up in age and I can't wait any longer, I need to do it now. All of my fights have been great and now is the prime time to face the challenge of Roman Gonzalez on October 17. It is all about timing and now I have the confidence and the strength and the will and the drive to go up against a fighter like him.

Gonzalez has choirboy looks but killer knockout ratio; but you are the more experienced fighter – how do you plan to win?

Brian “Hawaiian Punch” Vilorio: There is no secret – it is just working hard in training camp, getting up extra early, doing my roadwork, doing my strength and conditioning, getting the right sparring and just grinding it out every day and not cutting any corners. I don’t think I have cut any corners for this fight in fact I have gone beyond to get myself prepared for this fight. And doing the little things like eating right and not staying up late to get myself prepared for a fighter like Roman Gonzalez. I haven’t put myself in a position where I am stressing myself out too much. I am in a great place right now, I think I have trained really hard. I went into camp right after my last fight and if the weigh-in was tomorrow I would make weight. That is what a lot of fighters have to worry about – having to drop down in weight so much and I didn’t have to worry about that. This training camp has had no bumps in it and I’ll be ready for October 17 and in a couple weeks I will be ready to get in the ring with Roman and we are going to go. I am going to do my best and let my hands go and give the fans the fight that they want to see.

What do you study when you watch tapes?

Brian “Hawaiian Punch” Vilorio: We study tendencies and kinks in the armor and see if you can expose certain flaws that you see in a fighter. You want to see certain tendencies that he has when he throws certain punches and if there are certain things he likes to do in certain situations and try to work your style against that and try to find the weaknesses. Every fight is different and every fighter has a different strategy for each fight – sometimes you have to box and sometimes you have to change it up and slug it out. Try to link the tendencies to the mistakes and use that to neutralize him.

So you have a plan A but need to have secondary plans if that doesn’t work?

Brian “Hawaiian Punch” Vilorio: Most times that is what you try to prepare yourself for and you have to be versatile so you are not stuck trying to figure out what is going on, like what Bruce Lee said “you try to be like water and react.” You need to be able to change it up, if the body shots are not working you have to find a way to get into the weakness. You have to be versatile and not stick to one game plan.

The 1994 Carbajal-Chiquita rematch they earned seven figure purses – a first for flyweights - and that was actually part of the promotion. Has any flyweights earned as much since?

Gary Gittelsohn: No and I have had this conversation with Bob Arum many times. I am a businessman and we all understand the economics of the sport – you don’t put \$2M purses up unless you know that the promotion can support those kinds of expenses. That was the last particular time that the flyweights had captured the imagination of the general public. Even though Brian is one of the few known commodities in this division, Chocolatito’s ascendency has stirred the pot a bit so that in the future you can see purses rising to more meaningful levels and should Brian come out victorious on October 17 and depending on how the fight goes, the rematch might command that. Dance partners are always important and that goes with any division – there is Mayweather-Pacquiao and there is Mayweather-Berto - the economics are very different.

In Closing...

Gary Gittelsohn: Not to repeat myself but there are going to be fireworks and it is going to be great. I urge everyone to tune in to the PPV to see this fight because this is one of those rare times where the co-feature is every bit as good as the main event. What K2 Promotions is offering here – they really should be commended – this is real value for the dollar. I can tell you that Brian Vilorio is

coming here to win this fight and surprise a lot of people and those are the kind of events and kind of happenings that people talk about for years to come so don't miss this one.

Brian "Hawaiian Punch" Viloría: I can just say that I have done all the work and I hope everyone is going to tune in on October 17 to see the final product and it is going to be an explosive fight. There are going to be a lot of fireworks going off that night and this is going to be the type of show that everyone is going to want to spend their money on and take their time off to sit down and watch and enjoy the show.

Tom Loeffler: Thanks to the teams for being on the call. We are going to have a full schedule of media events for fight week. We will have a media workout on Tuesday and the main event press conference on Wednesday. This co-feature is so big that we are going to have a separate press conference for that on Thursday and the weigh-in will be on Friday. We have priced the pay-per-view for the fans and when there are two great fights like we have there is great value at \$49.95 – Golovkin vs. Lemieux and Chocolatito vs. Viloría. There are two additional fights on the pay-per-view, which include the IBF eliminator between Tureano Johnson vs. Eamonn O'Kane and Luis Ortiz, the big-punching heavyweight from Cuba versus Matias Ariel Vidondo from Argentina.

Tickets at Madison Square Garden are virtually sold out – as of yesterday there were 292 tickets left. So we look forward to everyone showing up at Madison Square Garden The World's Most Famous Arena and watching it on HBO Pay-Per-View.

Golovkin vs. Lemieux is presented by K2 Promotions and Golden Boy Promotions in association with GGG Promotions and Eye of the Tiger Management. The event will take place Saturday, October 17 from Madison Square Garden and will be produced and distributed live by HBO Pay-Per-View beginning at 9:00 p.m. ET/6:00 p.m. PT. Doors will open at 7:00 p.m. ET and the first fight begins at 7:05 p.m. ET.

Tickets for **GOLOVKIN vs. LEMIEUX** are on sale now and priced at \$500, \$300, \$200, \$100 and \$50 and can be purchased at the Madison Square Garden Box Office, all Ticketmaster outlets, Ticketmaster charge by phone ([866-858-0008](tel:866-858-0008)) and online at www.ticketmaster.com or www.thegarden.com.

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