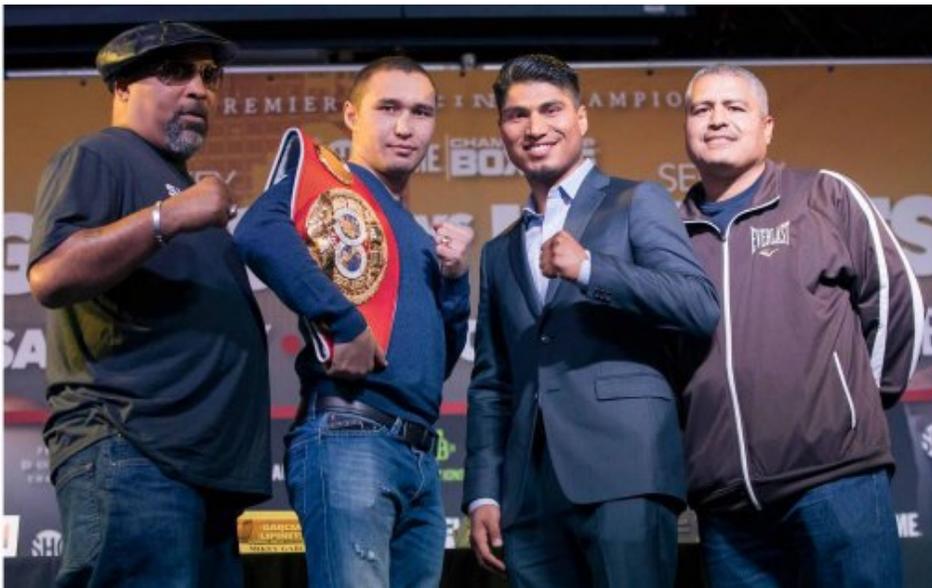


Mikey Garcia Exclusive: Talks Family, Top Rank, & Current Career Status

By [Caryn A. Tate](#) on January 11, 2018



"I have no long-term commitment with anybody, and it's working." (Esther Lin/Showtime)

"My dad always had a dream of being involved in boxing and having championship fighters. And he finally got there..."

One of the things boxing fans love most about the sport are the captivating and inspiring stories of the fighters. For the average person, the sport is a metaphor for life and its challenges, so the more a boxer has overcome, the more motivational his or her tale.

Mikey Garcia (37-0, 30 KOs) is a natural fighter in and out of the ring, and his story is a remarkable one. It starts with the tale of his parents, Eduardo and Virginia, who immigrated to California from Mexico and toiled in backbreaking, thankless jobs to make a better life for their children. "I still remember my dad and mom coming home from working the fields. So no, we'd never forget that," said Mikey. "We learned from an early age it's not a matter of what kind of job you do. You've just got to keep your dreams going and you've gotta do whatever

it takes to find the answers and reach that dream. And my dad and mom did it, working for over 20 years in the strawberry fields. My dad always had a dream of being involved in boxing and having championship fighters. And he finally got there.”

Mikey is mindful of his parents’ history and the struggles they endured to get the Garcia family to where they are now. “It’s a beautiful thing to know where we come from, where my dad comes from—the struggles and hardships that he had to go through to give us a better life. My dad came from nothing, with a third-grade education, an immigrant from Mexico. And now we’re here where the whole world recognizes my dad, my brother, myself, in the world of boxing. We were just talking about that the other day, that it’s so beautiful that people recognize the name from what he started. He built the foundation in the sport and now we continue that legacy. It’s just amazing. It’s almost unbelievable.”

Mikey’s older brother, Robert (now a highly successful head trainer of many top fighters, including Mikey), became a successful professional fighter first; when Mikey was a pre-teen and would accompany his world champion brother to the gym, he actively disliked boxing. Yet he displayed such natural ability that his father and brother encouraged him to continue, and when Mikey finally got into the ring for the first time, he was surprised that he enjoyed it.

As a professional, Garcia signed with promoter Top Rank. Mikey won world titles at featherweight and super featherweight before his promotional contract approached its end in 2014. Garcia then faced his next battle: this one was outside the ring, in court. “Even though they built me up well and they’re a good company to build young fighters, there came a time in my career where I didn’t see them, as a company, doing much for me or allowing me to grow anymore,” Garcia said. “It just wasn’t working. The contract was expiring, and they were trying to hold me down to a certain extension. It was just a big entangled mess. When we tried to clear it up with them, they didn’t have answers. That forced us to go into litigation, and I had to be out of the ring for over two years.”

Not many athletes would have been able to continue making a stand against a powerful business entity for over two years. It meant Garcia paid the legal fees out of his own pocket, with the added pressure that he was unable to earn an income via his profession. “During that time, Top Rank didn’t offer any fights, they didn’t offer to negotiate anything with me. I made attempts to settle, to negotiate the contract with them, but they just completely shut me down every single time. So that did leave a bad taste when it comes to long-term agreements.”

But Mikey prevailed, with Top Rank finally settling in 2016. Since returning to the ring in July of that year, Garcia has operated independently. He hasn’t signed

with any promoter or manager—instead, he opted to negotiate one-off deals rather than a binding, long-term agreement. “I’m not against long-term agreements with promoters or managers, as long as it’s a fair deal for me as a fighter and a fair deal for them as the business entity of the agreement. That’s fine, I totally understand that. If they happen to offer a great deal, then I would do a deal with Golden Boy. But we were not able to come to an agreement, so I had to find something else. And Richard Schaefer came in, with PBC and Al Haymon, and they offered something that really excited me, and that’s why we continue to work with them.

“But as I’ve been able to handle my career recently—I’ve been doing fight-by-fight agreements. I have no long-term commitment with anybody, and it’s working well for me. I’ve been working through PBC for these fights, but it’s just on a fight-by-fight. If they keep offering a better deal, well, that’s who I’m gonna keep working with. I’m able to walk over to Golden Boy’s offices [when] we were trying to negotiate a fight with Cotto or Linares. I’m able to do that because I don’t have any ties or commitments to anybody else. That’s what I really enjoy—that I have flexibility in my career.”

Garcia is pragmatic about the fact that his situation is a somewhat unique one. Not every boxer is able to operate independently, without a long-term promotional or managerial agreement, and the 30-year-old is grateful that he has the fanbase and name recognition that makes it feasible for him. “It’s great to be able to have the options like I have,” Mikey said. “And promoters that are actually willing to work with me that way, because sometimes they’re not willing to. Some fighters may not be able to sell [tickets] or pull the ratings and generate the money that the fighter and the promoter need. So they’re not able to get one-off fights and they need to sign long-term agreements. But I’m actually able to pull it off, so I’m very happy with the way things are going for me.”

Mikey will be challenging IBF junior welterweight world champion Sergey “Samurai” Lipinets (13-0, 10 KOs) on Saturday, February 10, live on SHOWTIME. Should Garcia prevail, he would become a four-division world champion at featherweight, super featherweight, lightweight, and junior welterweight, joining legends Manny Pacquiao and Juan Manuel Marquez as title holders in those four weight classes.

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