

A WORD TO THE WISE
Garcia has only been working with Donaire for two fights, but the improvement has been obvious



PHOTO BY NAOIKI FUKUDA

risk of producing too many red blood cells that could lead to heart attack or stroke.

"IHT helps your body become more energy efficient and improves oxygen uptake and utilization, delaying the onset of lactic acid production and increasing endurance," said Conte.

Donaire's three other team members include Mike Bazzel, a Northern California conditioning expert. They work out together at Brian Schwartz' Undisputed Boxing Gym in San Carlos, California, just down the street from SNAC.

"In the beginning, Nonito couldn't throw a left hook due to shoulder and back pain," said Bazzel. "He would be great for three to four days and then uncomfortable. So, we strengthened his lower back. I started with hips, abs, lower back—core work—and then incorporated squats and lunges. Every training camp we come up with something different. We pick a theme before each fight. Before the [Fernando] Montiel fight, we watched the 1981 Salvador Sanchez-Wilfredo Gomez fight. Sanchez hurt Gomez going into the second round. Nonito already had the seed planted he wanted to stop Montiel early."

Remi Korchemny, a PhD in exercise physiology from the Ukraine, came to the US following the 1972 Olympics and has worked as a coach and advisor for many high-profile athletes, including British sprinter Dwain Chambers. After also suffering the repercussions from the BALCO scandal, Korchemny has moved on and now works with Donaire.

"I have designed a program to strengthen Nonito's body to be better in the ring," said Korchemny. "I teach his muscles how to perform in extreme situations by improving agility in changing directions."

He believes that in some ways boxing is analogous to tennis. Like the tennis player, the boxer needs speed and power in moving back and forth.

The final team member is Dr. Cameron Fort, a chiropractor with extensive experience in working with successful professional triathletes, baseball, and hockey players. He utilizes a proven technique called Active Release Techniques (ART) on Donaire. ART is a soft tissue system that treats muscles, tendons, ligaments, fascia, and nerves.

"This is not a chiropractic technique," said Fort. "It is always a challenge to restore blood flow to a muscle. ART helps athletes train better. It is an advanced way to help someone heal."

Dr. Fort uses his hands to determine the specific tissues that are restricted and physically works them back to their normal texture, tension, and length by using hand positions and soft tissue manipulation methods.

"Nonito could only throw a few punches, and he would have tenderness," said Fort. "We worked on his shoulder muscles, and, within three weeks, he was sparring without pain."

"When I am hurt or sore, Cameron gets me in balance," says Donaire.

"I want him to understand why he uses specific therapies," added Conte. "Sparring will break you; you need to do things that enhance your performance and eat foods that fuel you for your job."

Donaire's team provides a mental advantage and increases his confidence. He believes that being mentally prepared helps one to be physically prepared, and then everything else falls into place. "Having confidence in your ability is the height of mental preparation—it surpasses everything."

Following his phenomenal second-round knockout win over Montiel last month, Donaire will take advantage of some well-deserved time off before resuming preparation for his next fight—hopefully in May.

"I have been training for six months straight," said Donaire. "I will continue light running and shadow boxing. I don't want to wear myself out. I feel tremendous."

THE RING asked Donaire what recommendations he has for other fighters that may never have the advantages his team provides.

"I would advise fighters to rest and to listen to your body," he said. "I have always learned that there is no better teacher than yourself. Be open to the teachings of others. Throughout my entire career, I have always researched things on my own, and then learn from other people." ■

Teamwork

Although a boxer stands alone in the ring, Nonito Donaire recognizes that it is a team sport. Besides his supreme skill, the three-division titleholder has put together a team that places him far beyond most, if not all challengers.

Donaire's trainer, Robert Garcia, is considered to be one of today's best. He understands a trainer does not have to force his will upon his fighter to see positive results. Garcia, who has trained Fernando Vargas, Antonio Margarito, and Brandon Rios, began working with Donaire before his December 2010 fight against Volodymyr Sydorenko. Although no one can dispute the significance of a great trainer, the 28-year-old Donaire enters the ring with four other great minds alongside him:

Former BALCO chief Victor Conte, who once assisted athletes in performance-enhancing drug use and is currently advancing anti-doping policies, had a fateful meeting with Donaire early last year. "Nonito's wife's parents and I live in the same city," said Conte. "He was sitting in a local bank filling out a

deposit slip, and the bank manager introduced us."

Conte now runs SNAC (Scientific Nutrition for Advanced Conditioning), a respected legal nutritional supplement program. Following thorough research, Donaire asked Conte to assist him with a supplement regimen.

"Nonito had the worst diet in the world," said Conte. "He would go all day without eating, perhaps until 4:30 PM, and no one would remind him. I designed a nutritional program with supplements as well as a meal replacement."

Donaire also undergoes blood testing to insure an optimal balance between training and recovery intervals.

"We started using a Memory Belt that measures heart rate, ventilation (the rate at which air enters and leaves the lungs), VO2 max (aerobic capacity), caloric expenditure, and breaths-per-minute," said Conte. "Now, Nonito understands the need for recovery. Sometimes he knows the best use of his time is to sleep, recover, and heal."

Donaire is very informed and utilizes this knowledge to make him stronger. "Growing up, I was a six-day-a-week boxer, but I would get sick or hurt before a fight. This is where Victor comes in. He reminds me of the recovery aspect. I have learned to listen to my body. It is working smart, and then you enjoy boxing more."

Conte's other work with Donaire includes simulated high altitude or hypoxic training. Hypoxic training began in the 1940s. It was a technique used to prepare Russian aviators that had to fly in unpressurized cabins. In the 1980s, athletes began to sleep at elevation and train at lower levels. The third generation of hypoxic training included sleeping in altitude-mimicking tents and training at sea level.

Conte recognized it was bad for boxers to sleep in tents as it made them oxygen deficient while increasing their heart rate. As a result, they would burn more calories, go into a catabolic state, and then lose strength and speed. So, he began utilizing IHT (intermittent hypoxic training) with Donaire. It stimulates larger red blood cells and vessel adaptation without the



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