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## **Muñoz plans his next climb up the cage to count**

By EARL WATT

• Leader & Times

The last time Mario Muñoz fought in Ulysses, he climbed the cage after what appeared to be a win by strikes.

Instead, his opponent was allowed to pick up his mouthpiece, for the third time, and the fight continued.

In the end, Muñoz lost the decision.

“In the first round I dropped him,” Muñoz said. “He threw his mouthpiece out, and the ref stepped in. I thought fight was over, I celebrated like I always do. It took me out of my gameplan. No hard feelings to the ref. They have a tough job to keep fighters safe. The other fighter, he outlasted me in three rounds. We will see each other again.”

Since then, Muñoz has focused on turning his punishing blows into a more formidable offense, and he has added the use of his feet in two ways, speed and strength.

“I have switched up a lo of things,” he said. “I will do some kickboxing, and my cardio is amazing. I just ran a 5K with AVID and Big Brothers, Big Sisters.”

Muñoz has been spending all of his extra time in the gym to prepare for the fight, and he knows that the fans want to see.

“That knockout,” he said. “Everybody is looking for it.”

This time, the fight will be for a belt in a professional bout, and Muñoz knows when the stakes are higher, so is the level of competition.

“He will come in with everything,” Muñoz said. “We are fighting for a belt. We will both be swinging. He won’t want to take my hits. Once we enter the cage, that’s when the nightmare happens.”

Hif fans are familiar with fight-ending blows, but Muñoz said that there is more to it than just offering haymakers.

“I’ve been working on a punch,” he said. “People will be surprised when they see it. I throw it with some different angles. Being a southpaw helps out.”

Muñoz will be in a rematch fight, and he will be expecting his opponent to try to use his weight to hold Muñoz down.

That allowed their last fight to make it to the third round, but Muñoz was able to avoid the big

blow after being mounted and was able to reverse and end the fight.

“He kept his weight on me and got to the third round,” Muñoz said. “That is when I submitted him. If I have to I know I can, but I will go for the knockout, when the punch is there I will throw it and use my speed. My speed allows me to follow up with my power.”

That is an additional way Muñoz expects to use his feet. Muñoz is usually the lighter fighter, and he plans on staying on the move to wear down his opponent until he has a chance to deliver the fight-ending shot. But it may not come from his hand.

“My kicks are solid,” he said. “People will be surprised. It will be the fight of the night.”

Muñoz is looking forward to the fights for the first time ever in the Seward County Ag Building.

“This venue will be great,” he said. “More people, alcohol will be available, and security will be good.”

Muñoz has dedicated his fight to his brother, a Marine going to Afghanistan.

And he doesn't mind if fans are for him or against him.

“Fans come down and watch me fight,” he said. “And haters, come watch me lose, right?”

Tickets are available at Rine's American Freestyle Karate or by calling 626-KICK, or online at [cagetix.com](http://cagetix.com).

## Let the Battle for the Belt begin!

Friday, 11 April 2014 09:35

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