

## Bay Area to host Pacquiao fight

*By Joaquin Henson 10/06/2001*

It's final.

International Boxing Federation (IBF) superbantamweight champion Manny Pacquiao battles World Boxing Organization (WBO) titleholder Agapito Sanchez of the Dominican Republic in a scheduled 12-round unification bout at the 7,000-seat Bill Graham Civic Auditorium in San Francisco on Nov. 10.

The fight will be in the undercard of World Boxing Council (WBC) superfeatherweight ruler Floyd Mayweather's title defense against No. 1 contender Jesus Chavez of Mexico.

The cable network Home Box Office (HBO) will televise both championship fights live on pay-per-view. Co-promoting the event are Top Rank's Bob Arum and San Francisco impresario Peter Howes who is staging his third Bay Area boxing show in the last six months.

Pacquiao leaves Manila for Los Angeles, where he will train under Freddie Roach, tomorrow. He will be accompanied by veteran Filipino trainer Ben Delgado. Pacquiao is expected to relocate to San Francisco at least a week before the bout.

San Francisco-based lawyer Sydney Hall, who is coordinating arrangements for the fight, described it as Pacquiao's "coming out party" in the US. Hall said HBO's ultimate dream is to pit Pacquiao against WBC featherweight champion Erik Morales.

But Hall warned Pacquiao not to take Sanchez lightly. "This isn't an easy fight," said Hall. "Remember what happened to (Naseem) Hamed against (Marco Antonio) Barrera – Hamed took Barrera lightly and got whipped. In a blush, in a heartbeat, Sanchez could turn the tables on Manny. That's why it's important for Manny to be ready. He's got to step up for his country. Every Filipino around the world will be praying for Manny to win."

Pacquiao will be paid \$120,000 for the fight arranged by his business manager Rod Nazario and agent Murad Muhammad.

San Francisco hasn't hosted a world title fight since Gene Fullmer beat Dick Tiger to retain his middleweight crown at Candlestick Park in October 1962.

The Civic Auditorium was named in memory of Bill Graham, a German-born concert promoter and artist manager who transformed the Bay Area into the world's flower-power music capital in the 1960s. Graham brought such acts as the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, and Santana to San Francisco and turned the city into a

the age of 60.

The four-storey building features state-of-the-art theatrical equipment and a high quality sound system. Among the artists who have performed at the Civic Auditorium are The Rolling Stones, Madonna, and Celine Dion. Folk rock icon Bob Dylan headlines a concert at the Auditorium on Oct. 13.

Former world champion Luisito Espinosa once fought at the Auditorium which has also been a site for big boxing cards.

Pacquiao, 22, and Sanchez, 31, won their titles on the same card in Las Vegas last June. Pacquiao stopped Lehlo Ledwaba for the IBF diadem while Sanchez knocked out Jorge Pabon Monsalvo for the WBO crown.