

Japanese boxing stars Inoue, Nakatani poised for showdown

By Ken Maguire

AP Sports Writer

The Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Manny Pacquiao bout happened probably five years too late. Tyson Fury and Anthony Joshua still haven't fought.

Naoya Inoue and Junto Nakatani are ready to square off now in what would be the biggest fight in Japanese boxing history. No posturing, just two top pound-for-pound boxers in their prime seemingly willing to give fans what they want.

Here's the catch: They each have one more fight and need to avoid a surprise before their expected showdown.

Inoue (31-0, 27 KOs) is the undisputed super bantamweight (122 lbs) champion and the headliner Saturday in Saudi Arabia. He faces Mexico's Alan David Picasso (32-0-1, 17 KOs). Nakatani (31-0, 24 KOs), moving up in weight to make his debut in the division, faces Sebastian Hernandez Reyes (20-0, 18 KOs) — also Mexican — on the same card, a showcase of Japanese fighters.

"This is very important for Japanese boxing," Inoue told The Associated Press through a translator.

Most important for Inoue and Nakatani, though, are victories that would clear the way for a blockbuster matchup, likely in Tokyo in May.

"Firstly, I have a plan to have a fight with Nakatani," Inoue said of his goals for 2026. "Also, I have the idea that I may move up to the featherweight division."

The buildup to the Riyadh event, billed as the "Night of the Samurai," has been as much about Inoue-Nakatani as it has about their re-



Japanese champion Naoya Inoue speaks during a press conference after his win Sept. 14 over Uzbekistan boxer Murodjon Akhmadaliev in Nagoya, Japan. AP FILE PHOTO/SHUJI KAJIYAMA

spective opponents Saturday.

In two of his past five fights, Inoue has overcome an early knockdown — both times from a left hook — en route to stoppage victories. Luis Nery stunned a Tokyo Dome crowd in May 2024 when he sent Inoue to the canvas in the first round. One year later, Ramon Cardenas dropped Inoue in the second round in Las Vegas.

Inoue's promoters made sure the Las Vegas fight was on ESPN rather than pay-per-view to expose him to a wider US audience. Bob Arum, Inoue's promoter at Top Rank, had said he wants Inoue to reach Shohei Ohtani-level fame.

Inoue himself, however, isn't so sure.

"Apart from the boxing, I'm a boring person. I just focus on boxing."

INOUE'S NICKNAME IS 'MONSTER'

With the retirement of Terence Crawford plus the injury layoff of undisputed heavyweight champion Oleksandr Usyk, there's a good argument that Inoue is now the top pound-for-pound boxer in the world.

The 5-foot-5 (1.65 meter) Japanese star, a four-division champion, uses precision combinations plus elite speed and power to dismantle opponents.

The Yokohama native has already fought three times this year, most recently a unanimous decision victory over Murodjon Akh-

TANK BOWL

The "showdown" between the NFL's only two-win teams when Las Vegas hosts the New York Giants on Sunday will be a rarity — and an important game when it comes to draft order.

This will be just the fourth time since the 1970 NFL-AFL merger, according to Sportradar, that the two teams with sole possession of the worst two records in the league meet in a game in the final two weeks.

The loser of the game Sunday in Las Vegas will "win" the right to pick first with another loss in Week 18, with a potential prize of Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback Fernando Mendoza or the chance to trade down for a haul of picks.

The previous three late-season showdowns for the top pick didn't provide a great prize to the team that ended up No. 1.

In 1981, New England lost the season finale to Baltimore and ended up with defensive lineman Kenneth Sims,

who had 17 sacks in eight seasons and never made a Pro Bowl.

In 1980, the winless Saints beat the three-win Jets in Week 15 after already clinching the top pick in the draft. New Orleans picked running back George Rogers, who had a solid career, but wasn't nearly as good as the three Hall of Fame defenders who went in the top eight of that draft: Lawrence Taylor, Kenny Easley and Ronnie Lott.

The first time it happened came in 1971 when Buffalo lost to Houston in Week 15 to clinch the top pick. The Bills took defensive lineman Walt Patulski, who lasted just five seasons.

TRIPLE-THREAT TAYSON

New Orleans' jack-of-all-trades Taysom Hill reached an exclusive mark when he caught a 7-yard pass from Tyler Shough in the fourth quarter on Sunday against the Jets to give him 1,002 yards receiving in his career.

Hill already had

"The pressure is on Inoue, he needs to win," the 25-year-old Picasso told AP, also through a translator. "I have nothing to lose. Everybody expects him to win."

Picasso, who has studied neuroscience at university, vowed to take Inoue's belts in what he said will be "Mexican Aztec warrior night."

"I come to win. I will beat this guy. I will beat the Monster."

Picasso's training team includes cardio coach Germán Silva, who twice won the New York City Marathon (1994 and '95).

NAKATANI FOLLOWING INOUE'S PATH

Just like Inoue, the 27-year-old Nakatani has been collecting world titles as he's progressed through weight categories. The three-division champion vacated his two belts at bantamweight to move from 118 lbs to 122 lbs.

"I feel I have gained power and speed as well," he told AP.

Nakatani, nicknamed "Big Bang," said he's not overlooking his 25-year-old Mexican opponent: "He has a strong punch and he's very strong-willed."

Nakatani's goal for 2026 is pretty simple.

"I'm going to be the champion at super bantamweight."

HOW TO WATCH

The event at the 22,000-capacity Mohammed Abdo Arena is available pay per view on DAZN with a subscription. The ring walk for Inoue's fight is expected to be just before 4 p.m. local time (1 p.m. London, 8 a.m. ET), which is 10 p.m. in Japan. Nakatani's bout is scheduled to begin about 70 minutes before Inoue's fight.

topped the 1,000-yard mark as both a passer and runner and became the first player in the Super Bowl era with 1,000 yards in each. Hill capped his day by throwing a 38-yard touchdown pass to Chris Olave and now has 2,551 yards rushing and 2,426 yards passing to go with his receiving mark.

Three players reached the triple-1,000 club in the pre-Super Bowl era, with Bob Horner, Charley Trippi and George Taliaferro all doing it in careers that ended in 1955.

But no one had come particularly close since the start of the Super Bowl era in 1966, with no other player recording at least 660 yards in each category.

The closest any previous player came was Kordell Stewart, who easily surpassed the passing and rushing marks but finished with 658 yards receiving.

Terrelle Pryor had at least 1,500 yards passing and receiving but finished with only 646 as a runner.

LEGALS

(First Published in The Morning Sun on December 19th, 2025)

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS

City of Mulberry, Kansas

Plaintiffs,

vs.

Jerry W. Rasnic Living Trust

dated December 10, 2021

and

Jerry Wayne Rasnic if living or if dead, then the unknown heirs, executors, administrators, devisees, trustees, creditors, and assigns of such defendants as may be deceased; the unknown spouses of the defendants; the unknown officers, successors, trustees, creditors, and assigns of any defendants that are existing, dissolved, or dormant corporations; the unknown executors, administrators, devisees, trustees, creditors, successors, and assigns of any defendants that are or were partners or in partnership; the unknown guardians, conservators, and trustees of any defendants that are minors or are under any legal disability; and the unknown heirs, executors, administrators, devisees, trustees, creditor and assigns of any person alleged to be deceased,

Defendants.

Title to Real Estate Involved
Case No. CRP-2025-CV-000179

NOTICE OF SUIT

THE STATE OF KANSAS TO:

Jerry Wayne Rasnic; if living or dead, The Jerry W. Rasnic Living Trust dated December 10, 2021; then the unknown heirs, executors, administrators, devisees trustees, creditors and assigns of such defendants as may be deceased; the unknown spouses of the defendants; officers, successors, trustees, creditors, and assigns of any defendants that are existing, dissolved or dormant corporations; the unknown executors, administrators, devisees, trustees, creditors, successors and assigns of any defendants that are or were partners or in partnership; the unknown guardians, conservators and trustees of any defendants that are minors or are under any legal disability; and the unknown heirs, executors, administrators, devisees, trustees, creditors and assigns of any person alleged to be deceased,

and all other persons who are or may be concerned.

You are hereby notified that a Petition has been filed in the District Court of Crawford County, Kansas, by the above-named Plaintiff, City of Mulberry, praying that their title to the following described real estate in Crawford County, Kansas, to-wit:

Lots Numbered Twenty Four (24), Twenty Five (25), Twenty Six (26), Twenty Seven (27), Twenty Eight (28), Twenty Nine (29), and Thirty (30) in "Highland Addition" to the City of Mulberry, Crawford County, Kansas, according to the recorded Plat thereof.

Surface only.

be quieted, and that you, and each of you, be forever barred or restrained and enjoined from settling, up or claiming any right, title, interest, estate equity, lien or claim in and to such real property and you are hereby required to plead to such Petition on or before the 23rd day of January, 2026, in such Court at Pittsburg, Kansas. Should you fail therein, judgment and decree will be entered in due course upon such Petition.

City of Mulberry, Kansas

WHEELER & MITCHELSON, CHARTERED

Marshall W. Blinzler, Ks. Bar No. 26465

Fourth and Broadway

P.O. Box 610

Pittsburg, Kansas 66762

(620) 231-4650

Attorneys for Plaintiffs

TO THE PUBLISHER: Please publish for three (3) consecutive Fridays commencing on Friday December 19, 2025. Immediately after the first publication, please forward three (3) copies of the above and foregoing Notice to Wheeler & Mitchelson, Chartered, Fourth and Broadway, P.O. Box 610, Pittsburg, Kansas 66762-0610. Immediately after the third publication, make your proof of publication to the District Court of Cherokee County, Kansas.

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