



CRUISERWEIGHT KING DAVID BENAVIDEZ TO MAKE ARIZONA HOMECOMING SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5!

Mexican Superstar & Unified WBA & WBO Cruiserweight World Champion David Benavidez Faces WBC Cruiserweight World Champion Michal Cieslak Headlining a PBC Pay-Per-View Event Available on DAZN Through Prime Video from Desert Diamond Arena in Glendale, Arizona

Plus! Undefeated Star Vergil Ortiz Jr. Duels Former Unified Champion Keith Thurman in High-Octane Co-Main Event

Stacked Card to Also Feature Slew of Rising Stars as Emiliano Vargas, Marco Romero & Nikita Tszyu Enter the Ring in Separate Bouts

GLENDAL, AZ. – October 22, 2026 – Undefeated Mexican superstar and unified WBA and WBO Cruiserweight World Champion **David “El Monstro” Benavidez** will make his Arizona homecoming in a high-stakes unification clash against WBC Cruiserweight World Champion **Michal Cieslak** on Saturday, December 5 headlining a PBC Pay-Per-View event available on DAZN through Prime Video from Desert Diamond Arena in Glendale, Arizona.

The pay-per-view begins at 8 p.m. ET/5 p.m. PT and features a co-main event that will see all-action undefeated star **Vergil Ortiz Jr.** step into the ring against former unified world champion **Keith “One Time” Thurman** in a 12-round middleweight affair.

The pay-per-view will also see a trio of rising stars enter the ring in separate bouts as unbeaten phenom **Emiliano “El General” Vargas** competes in a 10-round super lightweight fight, plus rising middleweight star **Marco “El Tiburon” Romero** returns to action in an eight-round special feature, and unbeaten Australian star **Nikita Tszyu** makes his U.S. debut in the eight-round super welterweight opening bout.

Tickets for the live event go on sale TOMORROW, Friday, October 23 at 12 p.m. PT through [Ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com).

The event is promoted by Sampson Boxing and TGB Promotions. Ortiz vs. Thurman is co-promoted by Golden Boy Promotions. The Emiliano Vargas fight is co-promoted by Top Rank. The Nikita Tszyu fight is co-promoted by No Limit Boxing and the Rose Brothers.

“David Benavidez has been building his own legacy from the beginning,” said Sampson Lewkowicz of Sampson Boxing. “From when he became the youngest super middleweight world champion ever, to his time as light heavyweight king, and now as the unified cruiserweight champion. ‘The Mexican Monster’ David Benavidez hides from no one, and no one can stop him. David has always had my full support for his history-making career. This is his time.”

“Unified cruiserweight king David Benavidez is must-see entertainment every time he steps into the ring, and he’ll be highly-motivated to be at his best in front of his home state fans in Arizona as he looks to add another cruiserweight title to his collection against an experienced world champion in Michal Cieslak,” said Tom Brown, President of TGB Promotions. “Combined with a highly-competitive co-main event between Vergil Ortiz Jr. and Keith Thurman, plus rising stars in Emiliano Vargas, Marco Romero and Nikita Tszyu, and December 5 is set up to be a can’t-miss night at Desert Diamond Arena in Glendale, Arizona and on pay-per-view on DAZN through Prime Video.”

“There’s a reason why Vergil Ortiz Jr. is the most avoided fighter without a belt,” said Chairman and CEO of Golden Boy Oscar De La Hoya. “As a former world champion, Keith Thurman is a crafty, experienced fighter who has been in there with the very best and will give Vergil some good rounds.”

“David Benavidez returning home to Arizona for a world title unification fight is the kind of moment that makes boxing special,” said Britton Hardin, Head of Boxing, North America at DAZN. “With Benavidez chasing another world title against Michal Cieslak and a blockbuster co-main event featuring Vergil Ortiz Jr. and Keith Thurman, this card delivers star power, high stakes and must-see action. We’re proud to partner with PBC to bring another major pay-per-view event to fans on DAZN.”

****DAVID BENAVIDEZ VS. MICHAEL CIESLAK****

A three-division world champion, **David “El Monstro” Benavidez** will look to capture a third world title at 200-pounds when he takes on the WBC Cruiserweight World Champion **Michael Cieslak** in a showdown that will mark Benavidez’s first fight back in Arizona since a 2022 destruction of David Lemieux.

One of the best pound-for-pound fighters in the sport, the 29-year-old Benavidez (32-0, 26 KOs) made his cruiserweight debut in style on Cinco de Mayo Weekend, dominating then champion Gilberto Ramirez on his way to a sixth-round stoppage. The victory followed up an impressive 2025 that saw him best rival and then unbeaten David Morrell Jr. by unanimous decision to add the WBA Light Heavyweight World Championship to the WBC title he’d earned in 2024 against former champion Oleksandr Gvozdyk. Prior to that, Benavidez’s 2023 began with him defeating longtime rival Caleb Plant via unanimous decision in a March slugfest before stopping the previously unbeaten two-division champion Demetrius Andrade in six rounds in November. A Phoenix-native, Benavidez became the youngest-ever 168-pound world champion at just 20-years-old when he defeated Ronald Gavril by split decision for the vacant WBC title in 2017. When he was 15 years old, Benavidez went from weighing 250 pounds to a boxing prodigy under the watchful eye of his father and trainer, Jose, Sr., and his brother and veteran contender Jose Jr., as he famously held his own in sparring against middleweight champions Gennady Golovkin and Peter Quillin as a teenager.

“I’m excited to be fighting in Arizona once again,” said Benavidez. “It’s been a long time coming, but it’s finally here. I’m gonna give the fans in my home state of Arizona a great performance on December 5.”

The latest in a long line of Polish cruiserweight world champions that includes Tomasz Adamek, Krzysztof Wlodarczyk and Krzysztof Glowacki, Cieslak (28-2, 22 KOs) earned his belt with a fourth-round stoppage of former champion Jean Pascal in June 2025. Cieslak traveled to his opponent’s hometown to capture the interim WBC title, before being recently elevated, and will now step into the ring against a hostile crowd again looking to repeat the feat against Benavidez. A native of Kozienice, Poland, Cieslak enters this fight on an impressive seven-fight winning streak dating back to 2022, with all seven of those victories coming by way of stoppage. A pro since 2013, Cieslak had previously challenged for the WBC cruiserweight crown twice before becoming champion. In January 2020 he lost a close decision to Ilunga

Makabu, before fighting for the title a second time in February 2022 when he came up short against then unbeaten Lawrence Okolie.

"I've been waiting for this opportunity my whole life," said Cieslak. "This is exactly why I've been training – to test myself and compete on the biggest stage against fighters like Benavidez. I'm confident, but there's no point in talking nonsense. The focus has to be on hard work. Those who know me understand that I'm not going there just to show up. I will bring all three belts back to Poland after December 5."

****VERGIL ORTIZ JR. VS. KEITH THURMAN****

The co-main event will see a high-level crossroads showdown between the undefeated star **Vergil Ortiz Jr.** as he battles the former unified world champion **Keith "One Time" Thurman** in a 12-round middleweight bout that presents Ortiz with his most accomplished foe to date, while Thurman will look to put himself back in world title contention with a December 5 triumph.

Trained by the renowned Robert Garcia, Ortiz (24-0, 22 KOs) has dominated his competition on his way to becoming one of the sport's most highly-acclaimed rising stars. The 28-year-old Ortiz began his career fighting at 140 and 147 pounds, scoring a series of impressive victories over top contenders including Mauric Hooker, Egidijus Kavaliauskas and Brad Solomon. The Dallas-native moved up to super welterweight in 2024 and originally captured his WBC interim title with a 12-round decision over top contender Serhii Bohachuk. He followed up that triumph with the two most impressive victories of his young career, first earning a unanimous decision over top contender Israil Madrimov, before most recently blasting out longtime contender Erickson Lubin in the second round of their November 2025 matchup.

"I am pumped to share the ring with a former world champion in Keith Thurman, who I highly respect for taking the fight when everyone else decided to hide behind politics," said Ortiz. "Being the co-main for Benavidez is an honor as I respect him equally as a fighter and a person. It's gonna be a great night of boxing and overall I'm just happy to be active again."

Clearwater, Florida's Thurman (31-2, 23 KOs) has assembled one of the most impressive resumes among the top welterweights of this generation, having defeated former champions Shawn Porter, Danny Garcia and Robert Guerrero in high-profile clashes, unifying the WBA and WBC titles against Garcia in a rare unification bout between undefeated welterweight world champions. Thurman most recently dropped a March showdown with WBC Super Welterweight World Champion Sebastian Fundora. Prior to that, his only blemish came in a 2019 Fight of the Year against boxing legend Manny Pacquiao, with Thurman ending up on the wrong side of a narrow split-decision. Thurman bounced back against two-division champion Mario Barrios by winning a unanimous decision in February 2022. He was set to face Australian superstar Tim Tszyu in March 2024 before being forced to withdraw due to injury, eventually returning to the ring in March 2025 with a third-round stoppage of Brock Jarvis.

"I'm back with a vengeance!" said Thurman. "I'm bringing the heat in December with an action fight against Vergil Ortiz – another young lion. Fans should really enjoy this one – you know the resume. I fight the best and the gladiator in me is not done yet. Get ready, Christmas is coming early."

****EMILIANO VARGAS****

The second-generation phenom Vargas (18-0, 15 KOs) has shown tremendous prowess that has led many to tap him as a future world champion like his father Fernando Vargas. After a four-win 2025, the 22-year-old has kept his momentum going in 2026 with two more stoppage victories. Oxnard, California's Vargas now trains in Las Vegas and most recently delivered a fourth-round destruction of once-beaten contender Bryce Mills in June. Overall, Vargas has stopped seven of his last eight opponents, and against increasingly difficult opposition.

"This year has been a true blessing for me," said Vargas. "I started off with great performances in February and June, and outside the ring, I had some incredible opportunities—like being part of the

Super Bowl halftime show with Bad Bunny, throwing out the ceremonial first pitch at a Mexico game during the World Baseball Classic, and taking my first steps into the world of film. These are experiences I will never forget, but I am very clear that my priority and my passion will always be boxing. On December 5th, I return to the ring in Arizona on a card headlined by my Mexican brother, David Benavidez. I want to end this year on a high note by delivering a spectacular performance for my people and showing why I am ready to take on the biggest challenges of my career. Everything I've experienced this year motivates me to keep working even harder. 'El General' is coming with everything he's got—and the best is yet to come!"

****MARCO ROMERO****

Fresh off a highlight-reel one punch KO of Matias Ferreira on October 17, Romero (16-0, 14 KOs) will look to keep his momentum going on December 5. A native of Overland Park, Kansas, Romero had a stellar amateur career that included 23-national titles, most notably winning the 2024 National Golden Gloves title where he was named Outstanding Boxer of the Tournament. The 20-year-old turned pro in 2024 and has shown a propensity for ending fights early, with 13 of his 14 KO's coming within three rounds. Trained by top trainer John Brown, Romero has added five victories against increasingly stiff competition in 2026. Romero has gained top-level experience after recently making his second training visit to Montreal to spar with super middleweight champions Christian Mbilli and Osleys Iglesias.

"I'm excited to come right back, which shows me how much PBC believes in me, especially by putting me on another big card like this," said Romero. "To put me on another monster card with 'The Monster', David Benavidez, I couldn't be more grateful. Being on his card because so many Latinos will be there or watching because of Benavidez, can only help me. A platform like this is perfect for me."

****NIKITA TSZYU****

The son of former unified champion Kostya and younger brother of former champion Tim Tszyu, Nikita Tszyu (12-0-1, 10 KOs) will make his U.S. debut looking to continue his family's legacy inside the ring. The 28-year-old has faced impressive opposition ever since his pro debut in 2022, beating six undefeated fighters in his first eight fights. A native of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, Tszyu has also beaten previously unbeaten combatants Lulzim Ismaili and Oscar Diaz, and owns a stoppage victory over Koen Mazoudier. The 28-year-old most recently went 12 rounds for the first time, fighting the undefeated Ben Mahoney to a split draw in August.

"I'm excited to be making my US debut," said Tszyu. "To be on a massive David Benavidez card is truly an honor. He's the most exciting fighter in the world. He comes forward, he hurts people and he never gives anyone an easy night. That's the kind of fighting I respect. I also like to fight with that warrior mentality. Arizona is also where my father had his last victory, so it holds an important place in my heart. It will be special to write the next chapter of our family's story there. I've been building for this moment and am ready for this next step in my career. I can't wait for December 5."

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