



## FORMER WORLD CHAMPIONS KEITH THURMAN & MARIO BARRIOS COLLIDE IN HIGH-STAKES WELTERWEIGHT SHOWDOWN

**Thurman vs. Barrios Will Headline Stacked FOX Sports PBC Pay-Per-View Lineup on Saturday, February 5 Live From Michelob ULTRA Arena at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas**

**Four-Division Champion Leo Santa Cruz Returns to Take on Keenan Carbajal in Co-Main Event**

**Plus, All-Action Welterweights Abel Ramos and Josesito Lopez Square Off & Hard-Hitting Two-Division Champion Luis Nery Clashes With Unbeaten Carlos Castro in Televised Opener at 9 p.m. ET/6 p.m. PT**

**Tickets on Sale Tomorrow, Wednesday, December 22 at 10 a.m. PT!**

**LAS VEGAS (December 21, 2021)** – Former unified welterweight world champion **Keith “One Time” Thurman** will return to the ring to take on former super lightweight world champion **Mario “El Azteca” Barrios** in a 12-round welterweight showdown that headlines a jam-packed FOX Sports PBC Pay-Per-View lineup on Saturday, February 5 from Michelob ULTRA Arena at Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in Las Vegas.

In the co-feature, four-division world champion **Leo “El Terremoto” Santa Cruz** will battle **Keenan “Bedo” Carbajal** in a 10-round super featherweight match, while battle-tested all-action welterweights **Abel Ramos** and **Josesito “Riverside Rocky” Lopez** clash in a 10-round attraction. The pay-per-view telecast begins at 9 p.m. ET/6 p.m. PT with former two-division champion **Luis “Pantera” Nery** battling unbeaten **Carlos Castro** in a 10-round super bantamweight duel.

Both Thurman and Barrios will look to rebound from their first career defeats with statement victories on February 5 to put them back on the path toward another world title. Thurman will be returning to the ring after a 30-month absence, which is the longest of his career. Barrios will be testing himself at 147-pounds for the first time in his pro career and against one of the best and most experienced welterweights in the sport.

“This is one of the most exciting and intriguing cards from top to bottom that I’ve seen in a long time. Keith Thurman and Mario Barrios will be looking to do whatever they can to get a big win in this fight,” said Tom Brown, President of TGB Promotions. “Leo Santa Cruz is also sure to be highly motivated in his ring return and I expect that he will come with added intensity against Keenan Carbajal. In addition to those fights, everyone knows the fireworks that Abel Ramos and Josesito Lopez, plus Luis Nery and undefeated Carlos Castro, bring to the ring. It’s going to be a special night for boxing fans on February 5 live from Las Vegas on FOX Sports PBC Pay-Per-View.”

Tickets for the live event, which is promoted by TGB Promotions, go on sale Wednesday, Dec. 22 at 10 a.m. PT and will be available at [axs.com](https://www.axs.com).

The 33-year-old Thurman (29-1, 22 KOs) has assembled one of the most impressive resumes among the top welterweights of this generation, having defeated former champions like Shawn Porter, Danny Garcia and Robert Guerrero. The Clearwater, Florida native took the first loss of his career when he dropped a close decision to Manny Pacquiao in a 2019 Fight of the Year in his last outing.

Thurman proved that he is must-see TV when his welterweight title unification match against Danny Garcia peaked at 5.1 million viewers in prime time on network television. It was the largest audience to see a live boxing match on prime-time network television since 1998.

“It’s been a long time coming for my return to the ring, and I can’t wait to compete again,” said Thurman. “In 2022, I will remind the world of boxing that Keith 'One Time' Thurman is a fighter not to forget. I look not to the past nor to the future, I’m back now, and I’m ready to fight. I dream big, and now is the time to make that dream a reality. Get ready, because I’m putting in the work to put on a show against Mario Barrios on February 5 on pay-per-view. It’s begun and my time is now.”

Barrios (26-1, 17 KOs), 26, will be stepping up to a major challenge when he faces Thurman. The San Antonio native will be going against a seasoned welterweight in Thurman. Barrios will own a three-inch height advantage against Thurman and will look to use that to his advantage in establishing himself at 147 pounds.

Barrios lost his super lightweight world championship when he suffered an 11th-round TKO loss to Gervonta Davis in his most recent fight on June 26. The 5-foot-10 Barrios operates in the ring under the tutelage of renowned trainer Virgil Hunter. The pairing has proven to be successful as Hunter helped guide Barrios to the WBA 140-pound title when he scored a unanimous decision over Batyr Akhmedov in 2019.

“I’m excited to be making my welterweight debut against a great fighter and former world champion like Keith Thurman,” said Barrios. “A lot of fighters wouldn’t take this fight, but that’s why I wanted it. Both of us like to throw a lot of bombs and I believe this will be an all-out war. The fans know I’m a warrior and that I don’t back down from any challenge, that’s why everyone should order this fight. ‘El Azteca’ is going to make a statement on February 5.”

A four-division world champion, Santa Cruz (37-2-1, 19 KOs) has established himself as one of the best Mexican boxers of his generation. The 33-year-old Santa Cruz, who was born in Michoacan, Mexico and now lives in Rosemead, California, cemented his legacy with world championships at 118, 122, 126 and 130 pounds. He’s coming off a loss to Gervonta Davis in a lightweight and super featherweight world title bout on Oct. 31, 2020. Before that the only other blemish on his record was a majority decision loss to Carl Frampton in 2016, which he was able to avenge in the 2017 rematch.

"I'm excited to be back after a year out of the ring," said Santa Cruz. "I'm looking forward to giving the fans a great fight on February 5 in Las Vegas and hopefully everyone will enjoy my fight and a great night of boxing."

The 30-year-old Carbajal (23-2-1, 15 KOs) is the nephew of five-time world champion, Olympic silver medalist and Hall of Famer Michael Carbajal. But Carbajal is making a name for himself in boxing and is looking for a world championship of his own. A victory over Santa Cruz will go a long way toward helping him carve out his own niche in the boxing world. He thrilled the hometown crowd at Footprint Center with an impressive TKO victory over Josean Figueroa-Bonilla in his most recent fight on Nov. 13.

"This is my introduction to the world, and like the Phoenix, I will rise to the occasion," said Carbajal. "I'm preparing to be at my very best and give everything I've got against a great champion in Leo Santa Cruz."

Ramos (27-4-2, 21 KOs) is part of a boxing family out of Casa Grande, Arizona, which includes his nephew, rising welterweight undefeated contender Jesus Ramos. The 30-year-old Ramos has built a reputation as a hardnosed boxer who doesn't back down from a fight and gives as good as he gets. He turned the tables on Omar Figueroa, Jr. when he went toe-to-toe and forced Figueroa to quit on his stool in his last fight on May 1. He also owns a split decision defeat to welterweight world champion Yordenis Ugas and showed a flair for the dramatic when he scored a TKO victory over Bryant Perrella in the waning seconds of their fight in 2020.

"I'm excited to start off the year with a big fight," said Ramos. "Josesito is a very good fighter and I expect this fight to be a war. This matchup will be action-packed and fight fans will not be disappointed."

Lopez (38-8, 21 KOs) earned the nickname "The Riverside Rocky" because of his go-for-broke style in the ring. He has stepped in across from some of the top boxers in the sport, including champions Canelo Alvarez, Marcos Maidana, Andre Berto and Victor Ortiz. The 37-year-old from Riverside, California is always a tough out in the ring as noted by his narrow majority decision loss to then-champion Keith Thurman in 2019. Since that loss Lopez has put together back-to-back victories, defeating John Molina, Jr. and Francisco Santana.

"I'm extremely motivated and ready to take on my next assignment," said Lopez. "I'm expecting a tough challenge from Ramos, but I'm more than ready to display my skills and prove that I'm one of the best fighters in the world."

The 26-year-old Nery (31-1, 24 KOs) suffered the first loss of his career when he was stopped by Brandon Figueroa in a super bantamweight title unification fight on May 15. Before that loss, the Tijuana, Mexico native had blown through two divisions (118 and 122 pounds) with knockouts in 12 of 13 consecutive fights. He scored a unanimous decision victory over Aaron Almeda to pick up the WBC super bantamweight world title in 2020 and will look to move back toward a world title trajectory with a win over Castro.

"I am looking to start the year off with a bang in Las Vegas," said Nery. "I didn't want any easy fights, and I asked for the best ranked opponent I could get. Castro has a great record and is ranked highly in the super bantamweight division. A win over Castro puts me back in the world title mix and that's where I'm looking to be."

The undefeated Castro (27-0, 12 KOs) was born in Sonora, Mexico and came to the U.S. as a child, now living in Phoenix, Arizona. Castro has remained unbeaten throughout his career and can move much closer to a world title fight with a triumph over Nery. The 27-year-old took a big step forward in his last fight when he took on Oscar Escandon on Aug. 21, passing that test with flying colors after he knocked out Escandon in the 10<sup>th</sup> round.

“I’m super excited for this upcoming fight,” said Castro. “It’s a great opportunity to display my skills against a well-known and accomplished fighter like Nery. I’m going to show everyone why I deserve my high-ranking and earn a shot at the world champions.”

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