



## Leo Santa Cruz vs. Abner Mares 2 Los Angeles Press Conference Quotes & Photos

**Featherweight World Champions Battle Saturday, June 9 In World Title Rematch Live on SHOWTIME from STAPLES Center in Los Angeles & Presented by Premier Boxing Champions**

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**LOS ANGELES** (April 10, 2018) - Featherweight world champions **Leo Santa Cruz** and **Abner Mares** met face to face at a press conference in downtown Los Angeles Tuesday and discussed their world championship rematch taking place Saturday, June 9 live on SHOWTIME from STAPLES Center in Los Angeles in an event presented by Premier Boxing Champions.

Santa Cruz and Mares first battled in August 2015 at STAPLES Center with Santa Cruz earning the majority decision and a vacant featherweight title. Now, Santa Cruz will put his WBA Super World Featherweight Title on the line against the WBA Regular Featherweight World Champion Mares.

Tickets for the live event, which is promoted by Ringstar Sports and TGB Promotions, begin at \$50, plus applicable fees, and are on sale now To purchase tickets visit AXS.com or click [HERE](#).

Here is what the participants had to say Tuesday at the open to the public press conference from STAPLES Center in Star Plaza in Los Angeles:

### **LEO SANTA CRUZ**

"It was a really close fight the first time. Before the fight, I told him I would give him the rematch, just like I would have wanted if I lost. Now is the time and I think this fight is going to be even better than the first fight. Mares will be better with Robert Garcia. He has many champions and I've seen the improvement. That's great motivation for me.

"I know he's going to seek revenge, but I'm not going to let that happen. My dad is a smart man too and he always knows how to send me to the ring with the right style.

"When two Mexicans get in there, you know it's going to be a war. I hope everyone comes out June 9 because it's going to be a fight to remember.

"Every time I step into the ring, I do it for the fans. If it weren't for them, I wouldn't be here. I always want the fans to go home happy. I want to give the fans a great show on June 9 just like in the first fight.

"I think that Abner is going to be a little smarter than the first fight. He said in the first fight he didn't train for the right fight. I know Robert Garcia will have him bring a smarter fight. We'll be able to adjust and do what we have to do to win this one.

"I have to make some little changes. There will be adjustments. We have to be prepared to box. I'll listen to what my dad tells me to do. We'll know early and take it from there. I know how to fight different styles, but brawling is what the fans love. I'm going to do that while still being smart in the ring.

"This fight is dedicated to my dad as he battles cancer. The only way I can pay him back or try to lift his spirits is to train hard in the gym and give him this win. If he sees me not giving up, I think it will give him the courage to keep fighting his battle.

"It was hard after the loss to Carl Frampton. I got a lot of fan support that inspired me to get back to training and win my title in the rematch. My plan was to retire undefeated, but at the end of the day, the loss means nothing. As long as I give the fans great fights, that's all that matters."

## **ABNER MARES**

"This is going to be another great one. Leo Santa Cruz is a great person and a humble guy. You have to be the bad guy against Leo. I could talk about what I'm going to do in the ring, but my fists and my brain will do the work for me.

"Once we get in the ring, you already know what it's going to be. It was war from the first bell last time. Nothing could stop either of us. We pleased the fans and gave them a great night. This is going to be the same thing. We're two young fighters, fighting for pride.

"The fight is here now and it's official. I'm eager to get this win and get redemption. There were things I could have done that would have made the fight easier for myself. Once you get in there, I know we all have a plan, but once you hear the crowd, it can go out the window. I'm a warrior and that type of fighter who's looking to get the win no matter what.

"I'm not worried about the decision in the first fight. I think he landed the clearer punches but it was definitely a close fight. I was happy with my performance as far as pleasing the crowd. I've moved on to the rematch. I'm going to make adjustments and get the win.

"I can talk about how I've changed, but you just need to look at my last two performances. People thought Jesus Cuellar was going to knock me out, but I was the one who dropped him. That lets you know what type of team I have and what kind of Abner Mares you will see on June 9.

"It feels good to be back fighting Leo for the second time at STAPLES Center. Every time I fight here in Los Angeles the people show me love. This is my hometown and STAPLES Center is my house.

"I've always seen holes in Leo's game that I can take advantage of. It's a matter of going in there with the perfect game plan. I feel like there's no way I can lose this fight. That makes it a more exciting fight. If he wants to box, I'm more natural than him doing that. We'll see who's done their homework and who can translate it to the ring."

### **JOSE SANTA CRUZ, Santa Cruz's Father & Trainer**

"My fight with cancer is the toughest one of all. But I'm fighting very hard and I'm not going anywhere. I'm right there by Leo's side all the way for this fight.

"For the first fight for Frampton, I had to try to prepare Leo from a distance. This fight is different because I'm right there every step of the way. I'm telling him what to do and guide him every day.

"I think Leo is even more prepared this time than for the first fight with Mares. Leo is doing great mentally because he's such a brave kid. I tell him not to worry about me and to keep working hard. He seems really motivated right now. He knows he's doing well.

"Right now we're working on maintaining speed, being smart and not looking for too much of a clash of a fight. I know Leo can win with his speed and his brain. He's learning and growing as a fighter. I think Mares has reached his peak. Robert Garcia is a great trainer, but at a certain point, there's nothing the fighter can do to surprise anyone."

### **ROBERT GARCIA, Mares' Trainer**

"I was there live for the first fight and it was a great matchup. I knew then that Abner was much better than the fight he gave that night. He left the fans happy, which is all that matters to him. But with me in the corner, it should be a different fight.

"I think the fans have seen what we've done with Abner for his last two fights and they know that it's going to lead to a totally different outcome in this fight.

"Abner tried to blitz Leo from the first bell and he knows that was a mistake. Leo is a tremendous fighter and you can never count Leo out. He takes a great punch and throws a lot. I think working with me for three years now will work out in Abner's favor.

"Leo always goes out and pleases the crowd. That's what he loves to do. It's my job to get Abner to fight smart and not focus on the crowd. He has to focus on what I'm telling him. I'll do what I have to to make sure he is.

"We've been training already for a little over a month. Sparring will start next week. Having Abner in the gym, we've taken his strength and conditioning to a level where he's really doing the right work. He's giving me good work each day so I know he's focused."

### **RICHARD SCHAEFER, Chairman & CEO of Ringstar Sports**

"This is one of the most anticipated fights of the sport. It's a rematch we've all been waiting for between great warriors in Leo Santa Cruz and Abner Mares.

"STAPLES Center has a rich tradition of bringing the best and biggest fights in Los Angeles here to this fantastic venue. STAPLES Center always seems to bring out the best in fighters as they fight under the brightest lights.

"Week after week we are witnessing great battles and great matchups on SHOWTIME. Every week is another 'Fight of the Year'. They are pushing the best to fight the best and that is what we are going to see with these two great fighters on June 9 in Los Angeles.

"We all witnessed the great first fight. Over 2,000 punches were thrown between these two fighters. It's impossible when you have Leo and Abner in the ring to see a boring fight. We are going to have the pleasure of seeing these two guys going again. Once again, it's a 50-50 fight. We don't know who's going to win, but we do know it will be all action here at STAPLES Center.

"Abner is a tremendous fighter inside of the ring and one of the most decorated fighters in recent history to come out of Mexico, but he's equally impressive outside of the ring. He has a fantastic family and is truly one of the good guys in the sport of boxing.

"I've known Leo and his family for a long time and have been involved in many of his fights. He is truly, just like Abner, a family man who just so happens to be one of the best fighters in the world. He's certainly one of the most exciting fighters in the world and it's my pleasure to be able to watch him fight again on June 9."

### **TOM BROWN, President of TGB Promotions**

"This is going to be an incredible night. Los Angeles has always been a great fight town going back more than a hundred years. Any time you put two Mexican warriors together like this, you can't help but get another great fight night in Los Angeles.

"In the first fight, Santa Cruz won an incredibly hard fought decision over Mares. From the opening bell they blasted away at each other, the crowd went wild and there was an all-out brawl underway for 12 grueling rounds.

"The last fight with this kind of significance in Los Angeles was when Bobby Chacon stopped Danny 'Little Red' Lopez in a now legendary featherweight fight in 1974. They fought for the mythical city championship on that night. While there are world titles on the line in this fight, I also know that these fighters have a lot of pride in Los Angeles and they'll be fighting for the championship of this city on June 9."

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