



**TWO-DIVISION CHAMPION REY VARGAS BATTLES
TOP CONTENDER O'SHAQUIE FOSTER FOR VACANT WBC
SUPER FEATHERWEIGHT WORLD TITLE LIVE ON SHOWTIME®
ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11 IN
PREMIER BOXING CHAMPIONS EVENT**

*San Antonio-Native and Former Champion Mario Barrios Duels
Jovanie Santiago in Co-Main Event and Cuban Heavyweight
Sensation Lenier Pero Faces Undefeated Viktor Faust in Telecast
Opener Live from the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas*

Tickets on Sale Now!

SAN ANTONIO, T.X. – January 23, 2023 – Undefeated two-division world champion **Rey Vargas** will battle top 130-pound contender **O'Shaquie Foster** for the vacant WBC Super Featherweight World Championship in a showdown that headlines action live on SHOWTIME Saturday, February 11 from the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas topping a Premier Boxing Champions event.

The SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING® telecast begins at 9 p.m. ET/6 p.m. PT and also features former champion and all-action San Antonio-native **Mario "El Azteca" Barrios**, now trained by top trainer Bob Santos, returning to the ring in a 10-round welterweight duel against **Jovanie Santiago** that serves as the co-main event. Kicking off the action, hard-hitting unbeaten heavyweights go toe-to-toe as Cuba's **Lenier Pero** takes on Ukraine's **Viktor Faust** in a 10-round attraction.

Tickets for the live event, which is promoted by TGB Promotions, are on sale now and are available through [Ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com).

“One of the best fighters representing Mexico in the sport today, Rey Vargas will look to continue to add to his resume in a tough fight against O’Shaquie Foster for the vacant WBC Super Featherweight World Title,” said Tom Brown, President of TGB Promotions. “Vargas has continued to pass every test put in front of him, and he’ll hope to do so once again on Saturday, February 11 on SHOWTIME. San Antonio is one of the best fight towns in the country, and with their hometown star Mario Barrios in the co-main event, plus an explosive clash of unbeaten heavyweights as the telecast opener, there’s no doubt fight fans will want to be out in full force at the Alamodome.”

Vargas (36-0, 22 KOs) is a former WBC 122-pound world champion and current WBC Featherweight World Champion who will compete in his third weight division since 2019 when he faces Foster for the vacant WBC crown. A master of distance with every punch in the book at his disposal, Vargas captured his 126-pound world title in his last bout with a decision victory over Mark Magsayo at the Alamodome on SHOWTIME last July. That marked his second outing at featherweight after the 32-year-old returned from a layoff due to injury to score a near shutout decision victory over Leonardo Baez in his featherweight debut in November 2021. The product of Otumba, Mexico went on the road to the United Kingdom to capture his super bantamweight title in 2017, winning a decision over previously unbeaten Gavin McDonnell, before racking up five successful title defenses. He has fought in the United States seven-straight times since picking up the 122-pound title.

“The Alamodome is definitely a beautiful venue and a place where I have wonderful memories, and we’re coming back to do it again on February 11,” Vargas said. “I want to thrill the fans so Foster can come at me with whatever he has. Let’s give the fans what they want. I’ve fought all kinds of styles, so nothing really surprises me. I have a hunch that Foster is going to come forward and be aggressive. If he fights me tactically, then I’ll be ready for that too.”

Following an extensive amateur career, Foster (19-2, 11 KOs) turned pro in September 2012, winning his first eight bouts. The 29-year-old, who has fought four times on *SHOBOX: The New Generation*, bounced back from decision losses in 2015 and 2016 to put together his current nine-fight winning streak. A native of Orange, Texas, who now trains in nearby Houston, Foster scored a 2018 victory over the previously unbeaten Jon Fernandez that set him on his path toward the top of the WBC super featherweight rankings. Foster solidified his spot with a knockout of veteran former title challenger Miguel Roman in November 2020 and followed that up with a 12-round unanimous decision over the previously undefeated Muhammadkhuja Yaqubov in March of last year.

“I appreciate Vargas for coming up and challenging me for the world title,” Foster said. “I’ve had to take a lot of ‘O’s’ lately and Vargas is going to be another one on the list. I’m looking to become the first world titlist to come out of my city so that I can make history for Orange, Texas and raise the bar for the next generation. I’m ready to show the world that I’m one of the top fighters.”

The 27-year-old Barrios (26-2, 17 KOs) returns to the ring after challenging former unified welterweight champion Keith Thurman in February 2022, dropping a decision in a hard-fought clash. The San Antonio-product, who now trains with Santos, a top coach, in Las Vegas, became a 140-pound world champion in September 2019, using his aggressive style to edge out Batyr Akhmedov and earn a unanimous decision. Barrios lost the super lightweight title in another action packed, highly competitive bout, as he was defeated by three-division and five-time world champion Gervonta Davis in June 2021.

“Everyone knows I come with everything I got when I step into the ring, and I’m excited to be back for this big opportunity on SHOWTIME,” said Barrios. “I’m even more motivated knowing that I get to fight back at home in San Antonio and give my people a great fight. Everyone is going to see pure boxing entertainment as I’ll be putting my skills on display with bad intentions. I’ve proven that I’m a warrior every time I get into the ring and I’m bringing that same energy for Santiago.”

Born in Bayamon, Puerto Rico and now residing in Dorado, Santiago (14-2-1, 10 KOs) impressed in his U.S. debut in February 2021 despite losing a competitive decision against four-division champion Adrien Broner on SHOWTIME. The 31-year-old followed that up in May challenging top 140-pound contender Gary Antuanne Russell in a bout he lost by sixth-round stoppage. Prior to those fights, Santiago had won four of five contests by knockout, a streak that followed a 10-round decision triumph over DeMarcus Corley in 2017. Santiago’s only blemish before the Broner fight was a majority draw in just his third pro contest.

“This is going to be a very exciting fight,” said Santiago. “I’m ready to go in there and throw a lot of punches. Barrios and I are both looking to bounce back from losses and show that we’re elite fighters. That’s going to make this an action-packed fight and I know that I have everything it takes to leave with my hand raised. The fans in San Antonio can expect us to give it our all from start to finish.”

A 2016 Olympian from Camaguey, Cuba, Pero (8-0, 5 KOs) had an extensive and highly successful amateur career that spanned over 100 fights, including multiple victories over countryman Frank Sanchez and efforts against heavyweight champion Oleksandr Usyk, heavyweight prospect Filip Hrgovic and Olympic Gold Medalist Bakhodir Jalolov. The 30-year-old now fights out of Miami, Fla., and made a successful U.S. debut on New Year’s Day 2022, defeating then-unbeaten Geovany Bruzon. He’s added two more victories since then, most recently knocking out Joel Caudle in a bout streamed via the [SHOWTIME Sports YouTube channel](#) and [SHOWTIME Boxing Facebook page](#) in August.

“I’m really looking forward to making my SHOWTIME debut on February 11,” said Pero. “Ever since I started boxing, I’ve been working toward my goal of becoming the first Cuban heavyweight world champion. Faust is a good opponent, and this is by far the biggest fight of my career. A victory will skyrocket my career and put me in a great position. I’m going to seize this moment and bring home a victory for my people in Cuba.”

Faust (11-0, 7 KOs) returns to fight in the U.S. after his last stateside outing saw him engage in one of 2022’s most unpredictable and fast-paced slugfests. The 30-year-old squared off with Iago Kiladze in January 2022 with both men hitting the canvas an astonishing five times combined in less than five minutes of action before the Ukrainian closed out the action in round two to earn a TKO. Faust has followed that up with decision wins over veteran title challenger Kevin Johnson in August and Franklin Lawrence in December before he returns to fight in the U.S. for the third time.

“This is a great opportunity for me to show off my talents in the U.S.,” said Faust. “I’m especially happy to be back against a great opponent like Pero. He was a good amateur, and I know we’ll both be very confident heading into this fight. I’m going to win and show everyone that I’m ready to do everything possible to reach my goal and become world champion.”

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