



## WBC Featherweight World Champion Gary Russell Jr. To Defend Against Former Champion Kiko Martinez In Co-Feature To Wilder vs. Breazeale Saturday, May 18 Live on SHOWTIME®

Unbeaten Super Lightweight Contender Juan Heraldez Takes On Former Champion Argenis Mendez in SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING® Opener from Barclays Center in Brooklyn and Presented by Premier Boxing Champions

**BROOKLYN** (April 19, 2019) - WBC Featherweight World Champion **Gary Russell Jr.** will defend his title against former world champion **Kiko Martinez** in the co-feature to Wilder vs. Breazeale on Saturday, May 18 live on SHOWTIME from Barclays Center, the home of BROOKLYN BOXING™, and presented by Premier Boxing Champions.

SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING® begins at 9 p.m. ET/6 p.m. PT and will also feature unbeaten super lightweight contender **Juan Heraldez** squaring-off against former world champion **Argenis Mendez** in a 10-round attraction. The event is headlined by WBC Heavyweight Champion **Deontay "The Bronze Bomber" Wilder** as he makes the ninth defense of his title against mandatory challenger **Dominic "Trouble" Breazeale**.

"Gary Russell Jr. is one of the most skilled fighters in the sport and he'll look to stake his spot atop the featherweight division on May 18 against the always exciting former champion Kiko Martinez," said Tom Brown, President of TGB Promotions. "The event will also feature a battle between a rising contender in the 140-pound division in Juan Heraldez going up against one of the division's toughest and most active contenders in Argenis Mendez. This is truly going to be an electric night leading up to heavyweight champion of the world Deontay Wilder in the main event."

"Preceding the night's main attraction will be Gary Russell Jr. defending his title against a tough and experienced Kiko Martinez, making for a battle that is sure to bring excitement to the fans, plus Mayweather Promotions' young prospect Juan Heraldez will open the telecast looking to put on a show, as he continues to elevate his career to new heights," said Leonard Ellerbe, CEO of Mayweather Promotions. "I'm confident that he will execute his game plan impressively and showcase his talent against a seasoned and tested Argenis Mendez, who has been in the ring with some of the top guys in the super lightweight division. The fans at Barclays and those tuning in on SHOWTIME will see a night of non-stop action come May 18."

Tickets for this BombZquad event can be purchased at [ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com) and [barclayscenter.com](https://www.barclayscenter.com), Tickets can also be purchased at the American Express Box Office at Barclays Center. Group discounts are available by calling 844-BKLYN-GP. The Heraldez vs. Mendez fight is co-promoted with Mayweather Promotions.

The 30-year-old Russell (29-1, 17 KOs), who was born in Washington, D.C. and now lives in Capitol Heights, Maryland, will make the fourth defense of his featherweight world title on May 18 and his second career appearance at Barclays Center. Russell won his title by knocking out Jhonny Gonzalez in 2015. After stopping Patrick Hyland and Oscar Escandon, he most recently defeated previously unbeaten Joseph Diaz Jr. last May. Russell, who is trained by his father, Gary, Sr., is part of a boxing family. Two of his younger brothers, Gary Antonio and Gary Antuanne, are currently unbeaten professionals.

"I expect to send a message to everyone in or near my division that I'm a force to be reckoned with," said Russell. "I want to unify against Leo Santa Cruz and I'm going to do what I have to do to get there. I'm never going to take any opponent lightly and right now, it's my job to take care of Kiko Martinez before I worry about anything else. On May 18 you should expect to see excitement, punching power, hand speed, fast combinations and a great level of boxing IQ. I'm the best in boxing today and I prove that every time I get in the ring."

A native of Comunidad Valenciana, Spain, Martinez (39-8-2, 28 KOs) has faced the best names in and around the featherweight division throughout his career. He won a super bantamweight world title in 2013 by stopping Jhonatan Romero and has faced the likes of Leo Santa Cruz, Carl Frampton, Josh Warrington and Scott Quigg. The 33-year-old is unbeaten in his last four contests, including most recently defeating Marc Vidal for a European featherweight title in October.

"I've been waiting for this opportunity to win another world title and I'm thankful and excited for May 18," said Martinez. "Gary Russell Jr is in for a rude awakening. I have a lot of experience and I feel great at featherweight. There will be nothing better than celebrating my 50<sup>th</sup> fight with a new world title."

The undefeated Heraldez (16-0, 10 KOs) continued to rise up the rankings in 2019 when he knocked out Eddie Ramirez in their February showdown. The 28-year-old from Las Vegas earned a decision victory over Kevin Watts and a stoppage of Maynard Allison in 2018. That followed up a unanimous decision victory over then unbeaten prospect Jose Miguel Borrego in his first 10-round bout in August 2017 on the Mayweather vs. McGregor undercard.

"I'm one of the best super lightweights in the world and I'm going to show it again on May 18," said Heraldez. "They keep lining them up and I'll keep knocking them down. Mendez is good, veteran opposition, but I'm going to show I'm on a different level. This is a great opportunity to once again perform on a big stage and I'm going to take full advantage and steal the show."

Mendez (25-5-2, 12 KOs) most recently fought to a competitive split-draw against Anthony Peterson in March, running his unbeaten streak up to three fights. The 32-year-old defeated Eddie Ramirez and Ivan Redkach in back-to-back fights after losses to Robert Easter Jr. and Luke Campbell. Originally from San Juan de la Maguana, Dominican Republic and now living in Brooklyn, N.Y, Mendez won the IBF super featherweight title with a knockout victory over Juan Carlos Salgado in 2013.

"This fight is do or die for me to become champion again," said Mendez. "Anthony Peterson ran from me in our fight in March, so if Heraldez does that on May 18, I will be better prepared. If he stands and fights with me, I feel strongly that I will dominate him and make a statement to everyone that I'm an elite 140-pound fighter."

# # #

For more information visit [www.SHO.com/Sports](http://www.SHO.com/Sports), [www.PremierBoxingChampions.com](http://www.PremierBoxingChampions.com), follow on Twitter @ShowtimeBoxing, @PremierBoxing, @BrooklynBoxing, @TGBPromotions, @MayweatherPromo and @Swanson\_Comm or become a fan on Facebook at [www.Facebook.com/SHOBoxing](http://www.Facebook.com/SHOBoxing) and [www.facebook.com/MayweatherPromotions](http://www.facebook.com/MayweatherPromotions).

#### **CONTACTS:**

Swanson Communications: (202) 783-5500, [contact@swansonpr.com](mailto:contact@swansonpr.com)

Tim Smith, Premier Boxing Champions: [timothy@haymonboxing.com](mailto:timothy@haymonboxing.com)

SHOWTIME Sports: (212) 708-1339

Mandy Gutmann, BSE: (718) 942-9587

Stuart Bryan, BSE: (718) 942-9574

Steve Pratt, BZA: (310) 408-4555

Media Credentials: [www.magnamedia.com](http://www.magnamedia.com)