



TOP LIGHTWEIGHT CONTENDERS MICHEL RIVERA AND FRANK MARTIN MEET IN HIGH-LEVEL MATCHUP OF UNBEATENS HEADLINING LIVE ON SHOWTIME® SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17 IN PREMIER BOXING CHAMPIONS EVENT FROM THE COSMOPOLITAN OF LAS VEGAS

Former World Champion José Uzcátegui Faces Undefeated Vladimir Shishkin In IBF Title Eliminator in Co-Main Event

Plus Bantamweight Contenders Vincent Astrolabio and Nikolai Potapov Duel in IBF Title Eliminator Kicking Off Telecast at 10 p.m. ET/7 p.m. PT

Tickets On Sale Now!

LAS VEGAS – November 22, 2022 – Rising undefeated lightweight contenders **Michel “La Zarza Ali” Rivera** and **Frank “The Ghost” Martin** will clash in an intriguing 12-round WBA Lightweight Title Eliminator as they headline live on SHOWTIME Saturday, December 17 in a Premier Boxing Champions event at The Chelsea inside The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas.

The SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING® telecast begins at 10 p.m. ET/7 p.m. PT and will also see former world champion **José Uzcátegui** return to action against unbeaten former amateur standout **Vladimir Shishkin** in a 12-round IBF Title Eliminator. Plus, bantamweight contenders face off as **Vincent Astrolabio** and **Nikolai Potapov** battle in a 12-round IBF Title Eliminator that kicks off the telecast.

“Michel Rivera vs. Frank Martin is one of the best matchups that can be made in the stacked lightweight division and the fans watching on SHOWTIME and at The Cosmopolitan are surely in for a treat on December 17,” said Tom Brown, President of TGB Promotions. “Each has shown immense skill and heart in earning their status as contenders, and they’ve proven that they’re ready to fight whoever it takes to become world champion. Adding in two closely matched bouts on the televised undercard makes this a night of drama that fight fans will not want to miss.”

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

Born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic and now fighting out of Miami, Fla., Rivera (24-0, 14 KOs) burst onto the scene in 2019, making his United States debut with a victory over Rene Tellez Giron. The 24-year-old continued his ascent with five more victories in 2020 and 2021, including knockouts of Jon Fernandez and Anthony Mercado. Most recently he outboxed Jerry Perez, earning a unanimous decision victory in October after dominating the previously unbeaten Joseph Adorno on his way to a unanimous decision in March.

"This is the type of fight that I've been asking for and I can't wait to get into the ring," said Rivera. "Martin is a strong opponent with a good record, but I'm ready to show that I am the future of the lightweight division. I've been training hard in Miami so that I'm ready for anything that Martin brings. Make sure you tune in to this fight!"

The 27-year-old Martin (16-0, 12 KOs) ascended the lightweight rankings in 2021 with a pair of impressive victories before delivering a New Year's Day KO over veteran Romero Duno. In April 2021, Martin knocked out the previously unbeaten Jerry Perez in a dominating performance before earning a unanimous decision over Ryan Kielczweski in August. He produced a methodical destruction of Jackson Mariñez in July when he stopped him in the 10th round, showing the skill set that has made him one of the most highly touted contenders at lightweight. Originally from Indianapolis, Ind., Martin now trains in the Dallas area under the guidance of Derrick James alongside his promoter and unified welterweight champion Errol Spence Jr.

"I'm excited to be able to go out there and prove to myself and prove to the fans how great I am," said Martin. "Michel Rivera is a good fighter. He's technically sound and seems to have a determined mentality which means he's going to come out and give a good fight on December 17. I'm just a few steps ahead of Rivera as far as having speed, power and ring IQ. I feel I have more in the arsenal. This is going to be an action-packed fight. There is going to be a lot of excitement, and a lot of hard shots are going to be dished out, so if you want to see a bang 'em fight, get ready to see two hungry, undefeated fighters go at it. Just remember: Every underdog had to go outside to an uncomfortable situation to become the top dog."

Born in Venezuela and fighting out of Tijuana, Mexico, Uzcátegui (32-4, 27 KOs) captured a 168-pound world title in March of 2018 by stopping veteran contender Andre Dirrell after eight rounds. The 31-year-old put himself in position to fight for a title with four straight stoppage victories from 2015 through 2016, including a win over then unbeaten Julius Jackson. Since losing the title to unbeaten champion Caleb Plant in January 2019, Uzcátegui has rebounded to win four of his last five fights, including most recently knocking out Felipe Romero in May.

"I am thrilled to be returning to fight on SHOWTIME on December 17," said Uzcátegui. "That is where I won my world title and I can't wait to put on another great performance. I am looking at this fight against Shishkin as my chance to reclaim my belt. I'm leaving it all in the ring in this fight. It's all or nothing for me once I step between the ropes."

Now fighting out of the resurgent Detroit boxing scene under the guidance of the renowned SugarHill Steward, Shishkin (13-0, 8 KOs) is a Russian native who turned pro in 2016 following a prolific amateur career. The 31-year-old stopped veteran contender Nadjib Mohammedi in October 2018 before putting together his most recent five victories in stateside bouts. That run includes three appearances on *SHOBOX: The New Generation* and started with an eighth-round

stoppage of DeAndre Ware on *SHOBOX* in 2019, a 2020 triumph over the previously unbeaten Ulises Sierra and most recently a sixth-round TKO of Jeyson Minda in March.

“This is an incredible opportunity for me to get closer to my ultimate dream of becoming world champion,” said Shishkin. “My opponent is a strong former champion with a proven record and an excellent skill set. However, me and my team are doing everything we can to be 100% on December 17. I believe that I’m facing a great opponent who will allow me to showcase my style of fighting.”

The 25-year-old Astrolabio (17-3, 12 KOs) put himself into world title contention with an upset victory over longtime pound-for-pound staple Guillermo Rigondeaux in February. A native of General Santos City in the Philippines, Astrolabio will make his U.S debut on December 17 as he looks to take one step closer to a world title opportunity. Prior to that decision victory in February, Astrolabio’s previous five wins had all come by knockout.

“I am very excited to make my U.S. debut on December 17,” said Astrolabio. “I want to thank my promoter Manny Pacquiao and my whole team for making this dream come true. I’m honored to be fighting in a world title eliminator. I truly feel that I earned this opportunity with my victory over Rigondeaux. This is my first fight on SHOWTIME and I’m training hard to make it a memorable one.”

Potapov (23-2-1, 11 KOs) has held his current training camp in Miami as he is co-trained by John David Jackson while he too looks to solidify his shot at a world title. The Russian native enters the fight on a three-bout winning streak following a narrow decision loss to Joshua Greer in July 2019. The 32-year-old turned pro in 2010 and was unbeaten until a 2016 draw against fellow contender Stephon Young.

“This is an important stage of my career and a fight that I’m putting everything into,” said Potapov. “Winning a world title has always been my dream. I know that this fight is one step away from that dream. I’m going to do everything I can in my power to make it a reality. I hope that my opponent comes into the ring at his best as well, so that we can give the fans a great fight. No matter what, I’m planning on having my hand raised.”

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