



**SUBRIEL MATIAS CAPTURES VACANT IBF 140-POUND
WORLD TITLE WITH FIFTH-ROUND TKO OF
JEREMIAS PONCE IN HIGH-OCTANE SHOWTIME® MAIN
EVENT SATURDAY NIGHT FROM THE ARMORY
IN MINNEAPOLIS**

***Minneapolis-Native Jamal James and Super Lightweight
Contender Elvis Rodriguez Score Victories in Televised
Undercard of Premier Boxing Champions Event***

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MINNEAPOLIS – February 26, 2023 – Power-punching **Subriel Matias** showed why he’s become one of boxing’s most vaunted knockout artists as he stopped the previously unbeaten **Jeremias Ponce** after five rounds to win the vacant IBF 140-pound World Championship Saturday night live on SHOWTIME from The Armory in Minneapolis headlining a Premier Boxing Champions event.

Puerto Rico’s Matias (19-1, 19 KOs) captured the title in an electric firefight that saw the two top-ranked 140-pounders throw over 800 combined punches in five rounds according to CompuBox. For Matias, the victory culminated a long journey that had him away from his family for nearly a year as he trained in Mexico for his first title opportunity.

“I’m on cloud nine right now,” said Matias. “I don’t think I’ve woken up from this dream. Maybe I can tell you how it feels tomorrow, but right now, it’s a dream come true. I wanted to work him from the first round on, because I knew he wouldn’t have the same power as me as the fight went on.”

Ponce (30-1, 20 KOs) came out extremely aggressive and looked to swarm Matias early as he threw 96 punches in round one, out landing Matias 28 to 11. Matias adjusted in round two, closing the distance and smothering Ponce to dull some of his attack while also finding spots for his own short power punches.

“I thought it was an even fight, but one punch can change everything and that’s what happened,” said Ponce. “Subriel is a tough, strong fighter and I knew what he was capable of.”

After landing a powerful left hand that hurt Ponce late in round four, Matias returned determined and sharp in round five, landing 47% of his power punches over the three minutes. In the waning moments of the round, Matias [landed the decisive blows, a series of head and body shots](#) that badly hurt Matias and put him on the mat.

Ponce was able to make it to his stool, but his corner had seen enough and suggested that the fight be stopped, with the official result coming as a TKO at the end of round five.

“I’m fine now,” said Ponce. “My team knows me, and they made the decision that they had to make. It hurts, but the most important thing is that I’m healthy.”

“I wasn’t really surprised,” said Matias. “Once I saw how his corner reacted. I saw that [Ponce] was hurt. I thought that I was patient in the first four rounds, so I came out with a different approach and mindset in the fifth.”

After the fight, with his IBF belt in tow, Matias set his sights on a unification showdown against WBC 140-pound World Champion Regis Prograis.

“Regis Prograis, I’m coming for you,” said Matias. “I’m the world champion now. I promise that I’m coming to hurt you. Prograis likes to talk the talk, but I have that same mentality. Let’s see who prevails. I want him to see that there are people crazier than him in this sport.”

In the co-main event, Minneapolis-native and welterweight contender **Jamal “Shango” James** (28-2, 12 KOs) returned from a 16-month layoff to thrill a sold-out hometown crowd and earn a unanimous decision victory after 10-rounds against Argentine Olympian **Alberto Palmetta** (18-2, 13 KOs).

“I’m pretty sure everybody can see that layoff affected me,” said James. “I had a lot of rust in me. My legs weren’t sharp, my punches weren’t sharp, but I’m glad I was able to get in there. I liked that because it’s pushing me mentally and it made me step up to the occasion.”

“I thought it was an even fight,” said Palmetta. “I was the aggressor throughout against a former world champion, a taller opponent with longer reach than me.”

In his first action since losing his WBA Welterweight Title to Radzhab Butaev in October 2021, James picked up his fifth career victory at the friendly confines of The Armory. Using his considerable height and reach advantage, James was able to control much of the action and contest the bout on his terms.

“I was trying to adapt,” said James. “I definitely felt like I won the fight but I believe I could’ve done much better. I know that I’m a lot sharper. I know that my endurance is a lot stronger. I just had a lot of time off and my body is still getting back in shape. I’ll be back for sure.”

“I also like to counter, but I ratcheted up the pressure in the second half of the fight,” said Palmetta. “Maybe it looked like Jamal James was superior in the first half because he kept being conservative and countering.”

Palmetta had success countering James but was unable to put together enough combinations or hurt James during the action. James’ edge was reflected on the scorecards, as he out landed Palmetta 193 to 111, including a 153 to 102 edge in power punches.

James was also able to use a sharp body attack to keep Palmetta at bay, landing 68 throughout the fight, compared to just 20 from Palmetta. In round nine, a sharp right uppercut caused Palmetta to stumble and led to a raucous exchange that stirred James' hometown fans.

The crowd again rose to their feet as James and Palmetta whipped power punches throughout the final moments of round 10. James kept his perfect record at The Armory intact by wide scores of 99-91 and 98-92 twice.

"I know I can be a champion again because I was a champion before," said James. "I have to stay focused. Stay in the gym and back and study this fight – actually, my last two fights – and step it up. Thanks to everybody in Minneapolis for coming and showing me love."

In the telecast opener, super lightweight contender **Elvis Rodriguez** (14-1-1, 12 KOs) overcame a slow start to earn a hard-fought majority decision over the hard-hitting **Joseph Adorno** (17-2-2, 14 KOs) after 10 rounds.

"Ring rust was definitely a factor," said Rodriguez. "Maybe the struggle was more mental than physical in a way, but the important thing is that I overcame it."

After a couple of rounds feeling each other out, Adorno was the first to have success, showing a varied attack with hooks to the body and head. He punctuated a strong fourth round with several counter hooks right before the closing bell.

In round five the action began to heat up, with Rodriguez starting to find a home for his offense as well, while still taking consistent return fire from Adorno. Rodriguez would eventually take control of the fight in the seventh round, [landing a perfect right hook](#) that badly hurt Adorno. Rodriguez followed up quickly and forced Adorno to the canvas to score the knockdown, although Adorno was able to stay in the fight and make it through the round.

"I thought I had him once I landed that right hook, but he got up," said Rodriguez. "He's a warrior and a good fighter... The seventh round was huge, that's when I truly started to win this fight. I have to give credit to Adorno for being savvy and knowing how to keep his distance before then."

Rodriguez rode that momentum through the rest of the fight, out landing Adorno 52 to 33 across rounds seven through 10. The Freddie Roach-trained contender punctuated his victory in the final frame, landing a left that referee Jon Schorle ruled a knockdown, despite the objection from Adorno, who felt he was tripped during the exchange.

After the 10 rounds Rodriguez emerged victorious on the judges' cards, as one score of 94-94 was overruled by tallies of 95-93 and 97-91. Post-fight, Adorno expressed his belief that his early success was enough for him to earn a better result, while Rodriguez set his sights on the new 140-pound champion Matias.

"I thought the judges were blind," said Adorno. "I can't get a win with these judges. I don't know how you see the fight 97-91. I thought I won every round except the ones he dropped me. He never out worked me at all. I had the jab in his face and was snapping him to the body. He couldn't do anything. No way he won seven rounds. I thought 94-94 was okay because of the two knockdowns."

“Like I said yesterday at the weigh-in, bring on the winner of the main event,” said Rodriguez. “And to my people in the Dominican Republic, just know that I’ll be back even bolder and even better next time.”

Prior to the telecast, the SHOWTIME BOXING COUNTDOWN show streamed live on the [SHOWTIME SPORTS YouTube channel](#) and [SHOWTIME Boxing Facebook page](#) and was topped by a welterweight matchup that saw Minneapolis-native **Ve’Shawn Owens** (14-3, 12 KOs) score a unanimous decision over **Kudratillo Abdukakhorov** (18-2, 10 KOs) after 10-rounds. The judges’ scores were 99-91, 98-92 and 97-93.

Streaming action also featured the Ronnie Shields-trained **Willie Jones** (9-2, 6 KOs) delivering a [vicious first-round knockout](#) over the previously unbeaten **Derrick Jackson** (10-1, 5 KOs) just 1:22 into their welterweight clash, plus sensational super lightweight prospect **Mickel Spencer** (3-0, 2 KOs), with his older brother and unbeaten contender Joey Spencer watching ringside, dismantled **Margarito Hernandez** (3-5-1) to earn a first-round TKO 2:18 into the fight.

Saturday’s SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING telecast will replay Sunday, February 26 at 9 a.m. ET/PT on SHOWTIME and Monday, February 27 at 10 p.m. ET/PT on SHOWTIME EXTREME®.

Veteran sportscaster **Brian Custer** hosted the SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING telecast while versatile combat sports voice **Mauro Ranallo** handled blow-by-blow action alongside Hall of Fame analyst **Al Bernstein** and three-division world champion **Abner Mares**. Three Hall of Famers rounded out the telecast team – Emmy® award winning reporter **Jim Gray**, world-renowned ring announcer **Jimmy Lennon, Jr.** and boxing historian **Steve Farhood** as unofficial scorer. The executive producer was four-time Emmy Award winner **David Dinkins, Jr.**, with **Ray Smaltz III** producing and **Chuck McKean** directing. Former junior middleweight world champion and *SHOBOX: The New Generation*® commentator **Raúl “El Diamante” Marquez** and sportscaster **Alejandro Luna** served as expert analysts in Spanish on Secondary Audio Programming (SAP).

The SHOWTIME BOXING COUNTDOWN show was hosted by award-winning *MORNING KOMBAT* live digital talk-show hosts **Luke Thomas** and **Brian Campbell**, who also serves as an expert analyst on the popular *SHOBOX*® series.

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