



**REY VARGAS CAPTURES WBC FEATHERWEIGHT TITLE
WITH SPLIT-DECISION WIN OVER MARK MAGSAYO IN
ACTION-PACKED FIGHT HEADLINING LIVE ON
SHOWTIME® SATURDAY NIGHT FROM THE ALAMODOME IN
SAN ANTONIO**

***Former World Champion Brandon Figueroa and
Rising Star Frank Martin Both Victorious By TKO in
Televised Undercard Bouts***

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Premier Boxing Champions**

SAN ANTONIO – July 10, 2022 – Mexico’s **Rey Vargas** became a two-division world champion Saturday night as he rose from a knockdown and boxed and banged his way to the WBC Featherweight World Championship against **Mark Magsayo** by split-decision in a dramatic showdown that headlined live on SHOWTIME from the Alamodome in San Antonio in a Premier Boxing Champions event.

“I’m at a loss of words,” said an emotional Vargas post-fight. “I worked hard for this. I want to thank God, my family, my trainer Nacho Beristain. The first title I won, I enjoyed it greatly, but this one is special. This win is for me.”

“It’s his today, no matter what, I’ll come back stronger, I’m disappointed but I did my best,” said Magsayo.

The battle of unbeatens was a fast-paced affair throughout, with both men holding momentum at different moments but never giving in to their determined opponent. Despite his height and reach advantage, Vargas (36-0, 22 KOs) was prepared to go toe-to-toe with the hard-charging Magsayo (24-1, 16 KOs) and was able to use his superior activity to edge the decision on the judges’ cards with two scores of 115-112 against a 114-113 score for Magsayo.

The only world champion from the Philippines heading into this fight, Magsayo was able to land numerous flush power shots on Vargas, who took them well and made sure to return fire with a

versatile attack of his own. This success showed up on the punch stats, as Vargas out landed Magsayo 196 to 132 according to CompuBox.

"I just kept moving forward and shrugging him off no matter what was happening," said Vargas. "All that mattered for me was coming out with the victory in the end."

Now a two-division world champion, Vargas showed that he could rebound from adversity, as Magsayo nearly turned the tide of the fight by landing a sneaky right hand late in round nine that put Vargas down (watch highlight [HERE](#)).

"It wasn't a power punch that got me," said Vargas. "It was more of something that happened because of how I was moving. We were able to recover and come back strong."

"When I had him down, the punch was straight, he did his job in the ring, running," said Magsayo. "I applied the pressure and did what we trained for in the gym, but he was taller and he's the man today."

Vargas showed his veteran mettle rising to his feet and surviving a shaky 10th round to come back and sweep rounds 11 and 12 on all three judges' cards to clinch the victory.

"It was a good, enjoyable fight," said Vargas. "We felt comfortable throughout. I was sound technically. We were just going round-by-round and we got the result we expected."

"I will rest and watch the fight and I'm going to train to fight again and will correct my mistakes for the next time," said Magsayo. "Thanks to all my fans in the Philippines. I did my best and will come back stronger."

After the fight, Vargas set his sights on a potential unification fight against four-division world champion and current WBA Featherweight World Champion Leo Santa Cruz, a potentially huge Mexico vs. Mexico clash.

"Now I want the unification bout," said Vargas. "I want to fight Leo Santa Cruz. We've already talked about it with my team and I'm ready."

In the co-main event, hard-hitting former world champion **Brandon "The Heartbreaker" Figueroa** (23-1-1, 18 KOs) returned to the win column with a dominant sixth round TKO of **Carlos Castro** (27-2, 12 KOs) in their WBC Featherweight Title Eliminator.

Competing in his first fight at featherweight, and first action since dropping a narrow decision in a 2021 Fight of the Year against Stephen Fulton Jr., Figueroa showed off his power at 126 pounds by dropping Castro midway through round three. Using his customary bruising come-forward style, Figueroa landed a looping overhand left that hurt Castro and eventually sent him to the mat on his follow-up (watch highlight [HERE](#)).

"I know Carlos Casto is a crafty fighter," said Figueroa. "I had to be patient. I knew how to put the pressure on him, after the barrage of punches, I got tired and had to step back. I knew he was hurt. and I had him, and I had to put more pressure on him. I caught him clean with a good looping left hand and I had him, I just put punches together and I dropped him."

A veteran who was also debuting at featherweight, Castro was able to use his ring IQ to weather the early storm from Figueroa. His short hooks on the inside and hard uppercuts kept

Figueroa from overwhelming him in the third round and helped carry him through the early rounds.

Despite taking that return fire, Figueroa was undeterred and continued to stick to his game plan and bring the fight to Castro. In round six, Figueroa broke through again with a series of shots, including a violent, short right hook that stunned Castro.

“Carlos Castro has a lot of heart, he’s a proven fighter in the ring and I knew it would be hard to get him out of there,” said Figueroa. “I hurt him, I was waiting for that shot to the body, once I caught him clean, I knew he was hurt. I put my punches together again.”

Figueroa took advantage of the moment and unleashed a relentless attack on the ropes that went unanswered and forced referee Mark Nelson to jump in and end the bout 2:11 into the frame (watch highlight [HERE](#)).

“I’m pretty proud of myself,” said Figueroa. “I know there’s a lot of work ahead of me, especially if I fight the winner of the main event. I have to study my fight and get back to the gym.”

In the telecast opener, unbeaten rising star **Frank Martin** (16-0, 12 KOs) showed the full complement of skills that has made him one of the most talked about up-and-comers in the 135-pound division, as he delivered a methodical destruction on his way to stopping **Jackson Mariñez** (19-3, 7 KOs) in the 10th and final round.

After a tentative first two rounds, the Derrick James-trained Martin began to use his superior footspeed to put himself into position to land his lethal left hand to the head and body.

“I was ready to go the distance whether I got the knockout or not,” said Martin, who’s stablemate and promoter, unified welterweight world champion Errol Spence Jr. watched his victory ringside and later told Jim Gray of SHOWTIME that he expects to face WBO titleholder Terence Crawford in a blockbuster welterweight undisputed championship fight later this year. “Me and Derrick James worked hard in the gym. It was just a matter of me being patient and not being anxious.”

Mariñez was able to use his size advantage over the early rounds to keep Martin honest, having success landing counter rights over the top of Martin’s guard.

“I felt great,” said Mariñez. “I was very comfortable inside the ring. It would absolutely have been a different result had I had more than eight days to prepare.”

Mariñez, who stepped in as a late replacement to face Martin, was unable to put together effective combinations and too often relied on single-punch counters. Martin was able to slowly break Mariñez down with a consistent body attack, landing 53 shots there throughout the action. He also held advantages in both punches thrown (505-411) and punches landed (160-106).

“I’m just an accurate puncher,” said Martin. “We had to really stay on the outside of the hook, I was doubling the two and trying to come inside with the hook.”

After a close first half of the fight, Martin began to pull away in the later rounds and finally broke through and hurt Mariñez late in round nine. He connected on a series of vicious left hands that staggered Mariñez, before a follow up attack left Mariñez on the mat in the neutral corner.

“The knockdown in the ninth changed the tone of the fight,” said Mariñez. “Maybe I could have been more careful. These things happen in boxing, and you just gotta be ready to roll with the punches. He had power, and so did I.”

Mariñez was able to get to his feet and survive the round, but Martin wasted little time restarting his offense in round 10. He pushed the pace from the outset and rained blows onto Mariñez, who was pinned against the ropes, until Mariñez hit the canvas again and referee Rafael Ramos jumped in to end the fight 30 seconds into the round (watch highlight [HERE](#)).

“I was on him once I had him hurt, I was hungry, he was in deep waters so I had to get him out of there,” said Martin. “I’m right there with those top guys at lightweight, sit me at the table with them, whenever, I’m ready. I’m going to sit down with my team and hopefully get something big. At the end of the day we’ve won them all.”

Prior to the telecast, bouts streaming live on the SHOWTIME SPORTS® YouTube channel featured unbeaten contender and rising star **Rashidi Ellis** (24-0, 15 KOs) score two knockdowns on his way to a first round stoppage of late replacement **Jose Marrufo** (13-11-2, 1 KO). Ellis dropped Marrufo twice in the first two minutes of the frame before a follow-up attack forced referee Ellis Johnson to halt the action 2:17 into the round.

Additional streaming saw San Antonio-native **Ramon Cardenas** (21-1, 10 KOs) edging a unanimous decision over Venezuela’s **Michell Banquez** (20-2, 14 KOs) after 10 rounds of bantamweight action. In a close fight contested largely on the inside, Cardenas was given the nod by the scores of 97-93 twice and 96-94.

The event was promoted by TGB Promotions. The Martin vs. Mariñez bout was promoted in association with Man Down Promotions.

Saturday’s SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING telecast will replay Sunday, July 10 at 9 a.m. on SHOWTIME and Monday, July 11 at 10 p.m. 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). *SHOBOX* announcer and combat sports expert **Brian Campbell** called the action during the live stream bouts.

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CONTACTS: Chris DeBlasio, SHOWTIME: (917) 445-7467

Mitch Abramson, SHOWTIME: (917) 547-7303
Flo Jocou, SHOWTIME: (646) 647-4741
Steve Pratt, BZA: (310) 408-4555
Tim Smith, PBC: (702) 843-3400
Swanson Communications: (202) 783-5500, contact@swansonpr.com
TGB Promotions: (818) 817-8001
Richard Oliver, Alamodome: (210) 207-8568;
Richard.Oliver@sanantonio.gov