



**UNBEATEN LIGHTWEIGHT CONTENDER FRANK MARTIN
EDGES ARTEM HARUTYUNYAN IN WBC TITLE ELIMINATOR
THRILLER HEADLINING LIVE ON SHOWTIME® IN
PREMIER BOXING CHAMPIONS EVENT FROM
THE COSMOPOLITAN OF LAS VEGAS**

**Super Lightweight Elvis Rodriguez Stops, Punishes Former
World Champion Viktor Postol in Co-Main; Welterweight
Prospect Freudis Rojas Dazzles Against
Diego Sanchez In Telecast Opener**

Click [HERE](#) for Photos from Stephanie Trapp/SHOWTIME

Click [HERE](#) for Photos from Ryan Hafey/Premier Boxing
Champions

LAS VEGAS – July 15, 2023 – With his famed trainer imploring him to get a knockdown, **Frank “The Ghost” Martin** rallied late and dropped **Artem Harutyunyan** in the 12th round to solve his more experienced opponent, capturing a close but unanimous decision in the toughest fight of Martin’s career in a WBC Lightweight Title Eliminator on Saturday on SHOWTIME from The Chelsea at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas in an event presented by Premier Boxing Champions.

Martin (18-0, 12 KOs) had to gut through what he described as an off performance against Harutyunyan, a previously undefeated Olympic bronze medalist from Germany who traveled to the United States for the first time in his professional career and fought aggressively and confidently. Still, with his promoter and stablemate Errol Spence Jr. cheering him on from ringside, Martin won by scores of 114-113, 115-112 and 115-112 and nearly closed the left eye of Harutyunyan as Martin’s supreme stamina and relentlessness allowed him to finish strong.

“I just knew I wasn’t active enough as I normally am,” said Martin, who won his second fight at The Chelsea in eight months. “I just think my reaction time just wasn’t on point tonight. He definitely was a tough opponent. I wouldn’t say that it was too difficult, it was just my reaction time

wasn't working like it normally does for me. I couldn't tell you know, just my timing seemed a little off tonight. He was definitely tough. I hit him with some big shots. He stood up, he bounced around in the ring like a ping pong, but he stood tall. I take my hat off to him because he took some big shots.”

Harutyunyan (12-1, 7 KOs) led 58-56 on all the judges' scorecards after six rounds but Martin won the last four rounds from the judges' perspective to seal the win. After his trainer Derrick James told him he needed a stoppage, Martin thundered out of the corner to start the 10th round and appeared to hurt Harutyunyan with a left to the body. With Harutyunyan's left eye closing, Martin again pressed the action in the 12th, chasing him around the ring. Harutyunyan took a knee with 53 seconds left in the fight, the first knockdown of his career, as Martin landed a barrage of rights and lefts. The break did Harutyunyan good, as he was able to recover and dance away from danger to survive Martin's onslaught.

“I don't agree,” Harutyunyan said of the decision. “If it's possible I will fight him again, but if it's not, not a problem. He's just a fighter. He's not Errol Spence. I'm a big fan of Errol Spence. My plan is to become a world champion, or at least fight for the world title, maybe against Devin Haney or Gervonta Davis. I can go up one weight class, it's not a problem for me. But I'm so happy to be here and I want to come back.”

On Harutyunyan taking the knee, Martin said, “No, I wasn't surprised. You know after a while, after I've landed so many body shots, I can get to wearing guys down. I didn't land as many body shots as I normally do, so, you know, he stood in there.”

Harutyunyan blamed his eye for causing him to take a knee in the final round.

“He's a good fighter. But I saw every punch on him,” Harutyunyan said. “The last one my eye got hurt very bad, so that was the point where I had to take a few seconds to recover [on the knockdown]. I think this round was the only round that decided it and gave it to him.”

In the co-feature, top super lightweight contender **Elvis Rodriguez** continued his rapid ascent with an impressive seventh-round TKO of former champion **Viktor Postol**, who was stopped on his feet for the second straight fight at this venue.

Rodriguez, who has notched four straight wins since dropping a majority decision to Kenneth Sims in 2021, floored Postol with a right hook in the final seconds of the sixth round and hurt Postol again with another right hook in the seventh round as referee Celestino Ruiz stopped the bout at 23 seconds of the frame as Postol stumbled into the ropes after absorbing a barrage of punches. Rodriguez led 59-54 on all three judges' scorecards.

The Freddie Roach-trained Rodriguez improved to 15-1-1 with 13 knockouts, while Postol fell to 31-5 (12 KOs) and has now lost three straight in his storied career. Postol was taken to the hospital for observation following the bout and wasn't available for comment.

“For every fight we always have a plan,” Rodriguez said. “Today, maybe it helped a little bit that Freddie trained Postol, but it's always a plan for a different fighter. This all started in the fifth round. When I hit him, I thought I fractured his nose, then I gave him a nice look in the fifth. So, in the sixth I was going for the kill. I felt I had him from the beginning in the seventh round. I gave him a hook and I saw that he was in trouble. And then the referee stopped the fight. So we knew we had won. I'm ready. I'm ready for a world title. I've worked too hard so far. Thank you.”

An interesting sub-plot of the match was the presence of famed-trainer Freddie Roach, who was in Rodriguez's corner on Saturday and had also recently trained and guided Postol. Their familiarity extended to Roach's Wild Card Boxing Gym in Los Angeles with the two frequently sparring. The experience favored Rodriguez as he hurt Postol with a jab-right combination midway through the third round that had Postol retreating for the remainder of the round.

Rodriguez landed a right hook to the top of Postol's head with approximately 20 seconds left in the third as Rodriguez began sitting down on his punches and opening up. Rodriguez hurt Postol with a left-right combo to the body with 20 seconds left in the fifth that nearly doubled Postol over and had him dancing away to end the round. Rodriguez caught Postol with a right uppercut to start the sixth and later stunned Postol with a hard right jab as Postol's left eye began to close and Postol's nose and mouth filled with blood before the bout was stopped.

Freudis Rojas, a slick, 6-foot-2 power-puncher from Las Vegas, dominated the very game **Diego Sanchez** in the telecast opener, stopping Sanchez at 58 seconds of the seventh round of the welterweight bout and extending his record to 11-0 with 11 knockouts when referee Tony Weeks intervened to wave off the action at the request of Sanchez's corner.

Sanchez's corner halted the bout after their fighter absorbed 159 punches while only landing 51, according to CompuBox stats. Rojas landed 47% of his power punches and averaged 23 punches landed per round and was landing too many unanswered shots when the bout was stopped. The photogenic Rojas, who won every round on the three judges' scorecards, was giddy with emotion in the ring afterward as he discussed the excitement of fighting on national television for the first time.

"You know this guy was a tough guy. We knew that he was gonna keep putting pressure on," said Rojas, who was extended past the fourth round for the first time. "I'm glad I got the rounds in because that's what we need in the pros. The more rounds the better, and I know the fans like that. This was the biggest blessing. Like I said at the press conference, when I found that the news [I would fight on the telecast] I was jumping around like a little girl like with some pom poms, man 'cause it's such a blessing. I think this is gonna open a lot more doors for me."

The southpaw Rojas relied on his long reach and lanky frame to keep the 5-foot-7 Sanchez at bay as he unleashed a steady diet of jabs and left hands. Sanchez's left eye started to close slightly early in the second frame as Rojas peppered Sanchez with snappy punches. The game Sanchez (19-3, 16 KOs) soldiered on and kept walking forward, even landing a stiff right hand and a left uppercut with a minute left in fifth that caught Rojas' attention. Still, it was a dominant performance from Rojas, who owns an amateur win against the headliner Martin and has sparred with elite talents like Terence Crawford, Jaron Ennis and Alberto Puello. All of Sanchez's losses have come against undefeated fighters.

Veteran sportscaster **Brian Custer** hosted the telecast while versatile combat sports voice **Mauro Ranallo** handled the 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®-winning reporter **Jim Gray**, world-renowned ring announcer **Jimmy Lennon, Jr.**, and boxing historian **Steve Farhood**, who served as unofficial scorer. The executive producer was four-time Emmy Award winner **David Dinkins, Jr.** The producer was **Ray Smaltz III** and the director was **Chuck McKean**. Sportscaster **Alejandro Luna** called the action in Spanish on Secondary Audio Programming (SAP) with former world champion and *SHOBOX: The New Generation*® commentator **Raúl "El Diamante" Marquez** serving alongside him as the expert analyst.

Saturday's SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING telecast will replay on SHOWTIME EXTREME® on Sunday at 12 p.m. ET/PT and on Monday at 10 p.m. ET/PT.

The event was promoted by Man Down Promotions and TGB Promotions.

###

For more information visit www.SHO.com/sports, www.PremierBoxingChampions.com, follow #MartinHarutyunyan, follow on Twitter @ShowtimeBoxing, @PremierBoxing and @TGBPromotions on Instagram @ShowtimeBoxing, @PremierBoxing, and @TGBPromotions or become a fan on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/ShowtimeBoxing.

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
TGB Promotions: (818) 817-8001
Swanson Communications: (202) 783-5500, contact@swansonpr.com
Katharine Sherrer, MGM Resorts International: ksherrer@mgmresorts.com
Allyson Wadman, MGM Resorts International: awadman@mgmresorts.com