



**O'SHAQUIE FOSTER SHOCKS TWO-DIVISION CHAMPION
REY VARGAS TO WIN VACANT WBC SUPER
FEATHERWEIGHT WORLD TITLE IN SUPERB DISPLAY OF
BOXING LIVE ON SHOWTIME® IN
PREMIER BOXING CHAMPIONS EVENT**

**Former Champion and San Antonio Native Mario Barrios
Stops Jovanie Santiago In Co-Main Event from
the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas**

**Unbeaten Heavyweight Lenier Pero Stuns, Finishes Viktor Faust
in Wild Telecast Opener**

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(Folder will be updated with images)

SAN ANTONIO, TX. – February 12, 2023 – With the words “ice water” and “shock the world” etched on his trunks, **O’Shaquie Foster** produced the fight of his life, coolly and methodically out-boxing two-division world champion **Rey Vargas** to capture the vacant WBC Super Featherweight World Championship in his first title shot live on SHOWTIME Saturday, February 11 from the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas in a Premier Boxing Champions event. Foster, who normally switches to southpaw in his fights, fought orthodox for the entire 12 rounds with the objective of befuddling Vargas, as he won by scores of 116-112, 117-111 and 119-109 in a dominant, albeit very competitive win.

“I can’t put it into words (what this means),” Foster said in the ring afterward. “I know my mom, my uncle, my grandpa, they are all looking down on me.”

Foster, a veteran of four *SHOBOX: The New Generation* bouts®, has overcome countless hardships in his life, including the death of his mother to cancer when he was 12. He lost a decision in just his ninth fight on *SHOBOX* and dropped a split decision three fights later. But Foster fought confidently and relentlessly on Saturday, as if he was the

undefeated fighter entering the fight, peppering Vargas with jabs and out-working him in the later rounds. With the win, Foster became the 88th *SHOBOX* alum to win a world title.

According to CompuBox, Foster threw 101 more punches than Vargas and landed 43 more shots (22 more jabs and 21 more power punches). In the championship rounds, with Foster's trainer Bobby Benton asking him to close the show, Foster out-landed Vargas 32-10 to secure victory.

"It feels great," Foster went on. "Dedication, hard work. I have a great team around me. Getting away from the distractions and preparing myself mentally and physically. My preparation was very important. I saw a lot of tape. I threw combinations. I knew that he counter reacted to previous opponents. I tried to switch up my technique.

"My coaches kept telling me to pick it up, we are ready to go. We can't get them out, but I felt good in the later rounds. I just wanted to make sure it wasn't a close fight. I didn't think it was close. My coaches kept telling me not to let off the gas. I'd love to unify [the division]. I'll face anybody."

Vargas, who disputed the decision, indicated that he will drop back down and campaign at 126 pounds, where he still holds the WBC belt. "We didn't get the decision at super featherweight," Vargas said, "but we are still champions at 126."

Foster, who has fought at 130 pounds or heavier for most of his career, stunned Vargas with a left a minute into the 11th, as swelling under Vargas' eyes was evident. Vargas landed a three-punch combination midway through the ninth as he began to fight with desperation. But Foster answered with a short right hand that seemed to buzz Vargas.

Vargas sustained a small cut over his left eye after Foster landed a snappy right hand and the two clashed heads moments later with a minute left in the third. Foster caught Vargas with a jab to the body to start the second that caused Vargas to fall to the canvas, but the referee ruled it a slip as Foster stepped on Vargas' foot during the sequence.

"I respect the judges," Vargas said in the ring. "I think this decision was not fair. I don't agree with it, but I have to respect it. I thought it was much closer than they saw. The weight difference may have affected me tonight. In boxing, you can use your legs to be technical or use them to run. Foster used them to run. He ran all night.

"There was a headbutt at the beginning of the fight that affected my sight for a second, but I recovered quickly. I thank all the fans that came out to support me."

Vargas fought without a familiar face in his corner as legendary trainer Nacho Baristain was absent for this assignment as Vargas' father Carlos took his place. He was trying to join other legendary fighters who have won titles at 122, 126, and 130, which include Manny Pacquiao, Leo Santa Cruz, and Mexican legends Erik Morales and Marco Antonio Barrera.

Vargas was returning to the Alamodome after winning the WBC featherweight championship in his last bout with a decision victory over Mark Magsayo at the same venue on SHOWTIME last July.

Former champion and San Antonio-native **Mario “El Azteca” Barrios** snapped his two-fight losing streak with a razor sharp, career-rejuvenating performance against **Jovanie Santiago** in Saturday’s co-feature. Barrios dropped Santiago in the eighth round with a left to the body and followed up, causing referee Mark Calo-Oy, upon the request of Santiago’s corner, to stop the fight at 1:42 of the eighth of their welterweight contest scheduled for 10 rounds. Barrios led 70-63 on all three judges’ scorecards at the time of the stoppage.

After Santiago (14-3-1, 10 KOs) touched the canvas for the fourth time of his career from the body shot, Barrios, who is back with top trainer Bob Santos, followed up with a straight right hand that snapped Santiago’s head back, causing his corner to step in. After losing his last two fights to top talents Gervonta Davis and Keith Thurman, Barrios (27-2, 18 KOs) had his way with Santiago, who was also coming off back-to-back losses to Adrien Broner and Gary Antuanne Russell.

The CompuBox stats backed up Barrios’ dominance. The 27-year-old landed 90 more punches than the gutty Santiago, who actually out-threw Barrios by a single punch. Barrios landed 39 more jabs, 51 more power punches and looked super-charged throughout the fight, buoyed from the hometown crowd and his own desire to get back into the win column.

He hurt Santiago with a right hand a minute into the sixth round, causing Santiago to briefly sag into the ropes. Barrios stunned Santiago again with a left to the body and head moments later as Santiago looked battered, his right eye badly swelling. Barrios landed a lunging left hook to end the sixth as Santiago somehow remained on his feet.

“It feels amazing,” Barrios said afterward. “It took me a while to get into that groove, to get that rhythm. I felt great. I wouldn’t say I was different [tonight], but definitely with a larger arsenal. I’m pretty thankful to have Bob [Santos] in my corner and my sister. I had to get just as physical. That’s another thing we have been working on in the gym. I knew Santiago was coming with it. And he took the fight in my backyard. That says a lot about him. He’s a hell of a warrior, I tip my hat to him.

“I felt myself breaking him down little by little. I just had to be patient. My counter right hand is something that we’ve been working on at the gym in Vegas. I feel I’m definitely up there with the [welterweight] elite. I still have something to prove. I promised my city a world title, and I got it in 2019 and I will do it again.”

Trailing on two of the judges’ scorecards, Cuban heavyweight **Lenier Peró** stunned Ukraine’s **Viktor Faust** with a hard right to the body followed with a left hand that rendered Faust defenseless and out on his feet in the eighth round. Peró pounced on Faust and landed several more unanswered punches, causing referee Rafael Ramos to stop the

heavyweight contest at 2:28 of the eighth round of the scheduled 10-round bout to hand Faust the first loss of his career as Peró remained undefeated.

It was a stunning turn of events, as Faust was controlling the action with his long jab and hard, thudding right hands until the final moments. Faust, who out-landed his opponent 389-183 in total punches, according to CompuBox, hurt Peró with a sweeping counter left to end the third round that stunned Peró and caused him to do a little dance in the corner with his legs, before he was saved by the bell.

While he was absorbing the heavier shots, Peró remained committed to Faust's body, landing 51 body shots throughout the bout, even as he fought off his back foot and Faust continuously advanced toward him.

It all came to a head in the eighth round when Peró caught Faust with a right to the body and left to the head that hurt him so badly he stopped fighting and turned his back on his opponent.

"After the 6th round, I had pain in my ribs, but I decided to continue the fight," said Faust. "The pain increased and did not allow me to compete to my full potential.

"I understood that during the bout I was winning and controlling the fight, but after missing a punch in the 8th round, the pain was so unbearable that I could no longer move. As a result, I won on points, but the injury gave the victory to my opponent!"

Peró, who has faced Oleksander Usyk and has multiple victories over countryman Frank Sanchez in the amateurs, finished off Faust to improve to 9-0 with 5 KOs as Faust dropped to 11-1 with 7 KOs. Faust has now lost to both Peró brothers as Faust was also defeated by his younger brother Dainier in the amateurs.

"It was a very difficult fight," Peró said in the ring afterward. "He's a great fighter, so I started to build up momentum and started to hit him and then we finally came ahead in the final round. Since the first round, I was trying to find his liver, trying to go to his body. His punches weren't that powerful, so I kept working and then found that final shot. This is pro boxing, and you can't turn your back on anyone. You can't turn your back, and I didn't and I took advantage.

"I'm setting my sights on England, actually. Let's see if the Brits would like to come fight Stateside. I would welcome them with open arms. I'm talking Tyson Fury, Dubois...bring them on!"

Saturday's SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING telecast will replay Sunday, February 12 at 9 a.m. ET/PT on SHOWTIME and Monday, February 13 at 10 p.m. ET/PT on SHOWTIME EXTREME®.

A four-bout SHOWTIME BOXING COUNTDOWN show on the [SHOWTIME SPORTS YouTube channel](#) and [SHOWTIME Boxing Facebook page](#) preceded the SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING telecast on Saturday.

In the main event of the streaming show, former titleholder **Claudio Marrero** of the Dominican Republic recorded three knockdowns against Las Vegas' **Gonzalo Fuenzalida**, all on body shots in the third, fourth and fifth rounds, forcing referee Jon Schorle to stop their lightweight bout at 43 seconds into the fifth round of their scheduled eight-round bout. Marrero improved to 27-5 with 19 KOs, while Fuenzalida dropped to 12-2 with 3 KOs.

In other action, unbeaten Filipino Olympic bronze medalist **Eumir Marcial**, who is promoted by Manny Paquiao's promotional company, dropped veteran **Ricardo Villalba** twice in their middleweight bout, causing referee Mark Calo-Oy to halt the action at 48 seconds of the second round as Marcial upped his record to 3-0 with 2 KOs, while Villalba fell to 20-8-1 in their scheduled eight-round bout.

The 23-year-old, 6-foot-5 Cuban heavyweight **Dainier Peró**, younger brother of unbeaten Lenier Peró, showed off his punching power and footwork against tough **Daniel Zavala** in another streaming bout, punishing Zavala over four rounds and winning a dominant decision by scores of 40-36, 40-36 and 40-35. Peró moved to 3-0 with 2 KOs, while Zavala of Del Rio, Texas fell to 2-2-2.

The 17-year-old blue-chip prospect **David Whitmire** of Washington, DC opened the streaming show and his pro career in fashion, dropping **Keith Foreman** of Harlingen, Texas twice with left hooks, causing the 154-pound bout to be waived off at 2:10 of the first round in a successful pro debut. Foreman dropped to 0-1, 1 NC.

The event was promoted by TGB Promotions.

Veteran sportscaster and *THE LAST STAND* podcaster **Brian Custer** hosted the SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING telecast while versatile combat sports voice **Mauro Ranallo** called the blow-by-blow action alongside Hall of Fame analyst **Al Bernstein** and former three-division world champion **Abner Mares**. *SHOBOX: The New Generation*® analyst and boxing scribe **Brian Campbell** served as in-ring reporter, while two more Hall of Famers rounded out the most decorated team in boxing. The internationally renowned **Jimmy Lennon, Jr.** served as ring announcer and boxing historian **Steve Farhood** handled unofficial scoring duties. Former junior middleweight world champion and *SHOBOX*® analyst **Raúl "El Diamante" Marquez** called the fights in Spanish on Secondary Audio Programming (SAP) with accomplished sportscaster **Alejandro Luna**.

Four-time Emmy® Award winner **David Dinkins, Jr.** served as executive producer with **Ray Smaltz III** producing and **Chuck McKean** directing. Award-winning *MORNING KOMBAT* digital talk-show co-host **Luke Thomas** called the SHOWTIME BOXING COUNTDOWN livestreaming show.

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