

UNDEFEATED FEATHERWEIGHT PROSPECT RUBEN VILLA TO FACE ONCE-BEATEN LUIS ALBERTO LOPEZ IN MAIN EVENT OF SHOBOX: THE NEW GENERATION FRIDAY, MAY 10 LIVE ON SHOWTIME®

NEW YORK – April 23, 2019 – Undefeated featherweight prospect Ruben Villa will face once-beaten and top-15 ranked contender Luis Alberto Lopez in the main event of ShoBox: The New Generation on Friday, May 10 live on SHOWTIME at 10:30 p.m. ET/PT from Omega Products International in Corona, Calif.

The 22-year-old Villa (15-0, 5 KOs) returns in a 10-round bout for his second consecutive test on the prospect developmental series after dispatching then-unbeaten Ruben Cervera in the first ShoBox telecast of 2019. The two-time National Golden Gloves Amateur Champion and highly touted prospect Villa will take on the Mexican Lopez (17-1, 8 KOs), who is coming off an upset victory over Ray Ximenez in his U.S. debut in February.

In the co-feature, fast-rising 21-year-old Texan Michael Dutchover (12-0, 9 KOs) will take on fellow undefeated prospect and former Chilean National Champion Ramon Mascarena Jr. (10-0, 5 KOs) in an eight-round contest. In the opening bout of the tripleheader that features six fighters with a combined two losses, undefeated bantamweight prospect Saul Sanchez (11-0, 6 KOs) battles Mexican Brandon Leon Benitez (14-1, 6 KOs).

Tickets for the event, which is promoted by Banner Promotions

and Thompson Boxing, are priced at \$125, \$75 and \$60 and can be purchased online at www.thompsonboxing.com or by calling 714-935-0900.

“This ShoBox show brings back former amateur standout Ruben Villa in his toughest test to date as he continues his quest to turn from prospect to contender,” said Gordon Hall, Executive Producer of ShoBox: The New Generation. “We get to see for the first time unbeaten Michael Dutchover, who went 130-17 in the amateurs, and now faces his first unbeaten opponent. In the opener, we have ShoBox newcomer and unbeaten Saul Sanchez who will try to stand out against a once beaten opponent. All three top amateurs, top pro prospects and looking to make a name for themselves as must see fighter. Only time will tell.”

“I am very excited for Ruben [Villa] and Michael {Dutchover},” said Artie Pelullo, President and CEO, Banner Promotions. Ruben is headlining the May 10 ShoBox in just his second time on the network. There is a lot of pressure on this 22-year-old, as he is expected to achieve and produce great things due to his amateur background. Michael is the diamond in the rough. Also an amateur standout who has power in either hand, he is looking for this SHOWTIME event to be his coming out party. The best thing I can say about Ruben and Michael is that there’s a lot of pressure on these two young men to perform at the highest level, and I believe they are absolutely up for it and they look forward to prove that they can make a mark in their respective weight classes. The pressure doesn’t seem to bother them.”

“This is our 19th anniversary and what better way to celebrate it than with three of our top prospects fighting on ShoBox,” said Ken Thompson, President, Thompson Boxing. “It will be a real pleasure to put on a heck of a show alongside our friend Artie Pelullo as we witness Ruben [Villa], Michael [Dutchover] and Saul [Sanchez] take huge steps towards stardom.”

Villa, who started boxing when he was just five years old, compiled an impressive 166-17 record as an amateur. The Salinas, Calif. native was a two-time Junior Olympic National Champion and the 2014 and 2015 National Golden Gloves Champion. He owns impressive amateur victories over Shakur Stevenson, Davin Haney and Gary Antonio Russell.

Villa has registered 15 consecutive professional victories since turning pro in 2016 shortly after the Olympic Trials, including a dominating unanimous decision over Cervera in his ShoBox debut in January. A legitimate prospect, Villa hopes to continue his rapid ascension in the featherweight ranks with an impressive showing against Lopez.

“I am very excited to get the opportunity to headline on ShoBox after being the co-feature earlier this year,” said Villa. “I have been working really hard and getting good sparring in Riverside. My opponent is 17-1, and he has won some regional titles. He is no stick in the mud. I know he comes forward and that should make for an exciting fight. I am looking to put on a great performance because I know a win will open doors for bigger fights.”

Lopez, a native of Mexicali, Mexico, is coming off the biggest win of his career. In his U.S. debut and first fight outside of Mexico, Lopez won a technical decision over prospect Ray Ximenez to pick up the vacant WBO International Featherweight title. Ranked the No. 11 featherweight in the world by the WBO, the 21-year-old Lopez has won his last five bouts since suffering his only defeat as a pro to Abraham Montoya in 2018.

“I have a belt for a reason and I’m going to defend it proudly on May 10,” said Lopez. “I know Ruben Villa is regarded as a top prospect, but I know I’m better than him and I’m planning to show the world on May 10th.”

The 21-year-old Dutchover, from Midland, Texas, began boxing when he was eight years old compiling a notable amateur

record. He was a runner-up at the 2016 National Golden Gloves and a Bronze Medalist in the 2016 Olympic qualifiers. Turning pro in 2016 at the age of 18, Dutchover has won his first 12 professional fights, including knockouts in his last four bouts.

“I’m very excited, I’ve been working for this opportunity all my life,” said Dutchover, who now trains in Los Angeles under the tutelage of Danny Zamora. “I know my opponent is tough and durable. Being on ShoBox is a great opportunity and it is the next steppingstone to reach my ultimate goal, and that is to become world champion.”

Chilean-born Mascarena, who currently resides in Tijuana, Mexico and trains in San Diego, Calif., turned pro in 2017 and has compiled a perfect record through his first ten contests—all within just 12 months. Fighting exclusively in his home country, Mascarena will finally be able to make his U.S. debut after he had a fight fall through in late 2018 and a second fight cancelled in February. Mascarena, who has fought mostly at 140 pounds, has not fought since his unanimous decision victory over Hector Medina 10 months ago.

“I’ve been in top share for a while now, I was set to fight in February but my fight got cancelled,” said the 25-year-old Mascarena. “I come from a family of boxers and we take the sweet science very seriously. On May 10, I will not only be fighting to make a good impression in my U.S. debut, I will be fighting for my family and my entire country. I will make them proud.”

The 21-year-old Sanchez, of Encino, Calif., began boxing when he was eight and compiled an amateur record of 90-18 before turning pro at 19 years old. Fighting exclusively in his home state of California, Sanchez has built up an 11-0 record under famed trainer Joel Diaz. The brother of featherweight prospect Emilio Sanchez, Saul is coming off a majority decision over Luis Fernando Saavedra but faces a stiff step-up in

competition against Benitez.

"I've always dreamed of having an opportunity like this," said Sanchez. "To fight on national television against a tough guy like Benitez. I know this fight will not be easy, but I'm ready. I will shine on May 10."

Benitez, from Queretaro, Mexico, has stayed busy in late 2018 and early 2019, fighting four times in a span of six months. The 21-year-old, who fought 186 times as an amateur, is the lone blemish on featherweight prospect Chaise Nelson's resume. Benitez has won five fights in a row since the only loss of his career, which came to then 10-0 and current 20-0 Mexican Irving Turrubiarres.

"I'm young and hungry and I know Saul Sanchez is a great opponent for me, but I'm not concerned about him," said Benitez. "I don't think he does anything special in the ring. I do, I'm confident I will win. I'm going for the KO."

Barry Tompkins will call the ShoBox action from ringside with Steve Farhood and former world champion Raul Marquez serving as expert analysts. The executive producer is Gordon Hall with Richard Gaughan producing and Chuck McKean directing.

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About ShoBox: The New Generation

Since its inception in July 2001, the critically acclaimed SHOWTIME boxing series, ShoBox: The New Generation has featured young talent matched tough. The ShoBox philosophy is to televise exciting, crowd-pleasing and competitive matches while providing a proving ground for willing prospects determined to fight for a world title. Some of the growing list of the 79 fighters who have appeared on ShoBox and

advanced to garner world titles includes: Errol Spence Jr., Andre Ward, Deontay Wilder, Erislandy Lara, Shawn Porter, Gary Russell Jr., Lamont Peterson, Guillermo Rigondeaux, Nonito Donaire, Devon Alexander, Carl Froch, Robert Guerrero, Timothy Bradley, Jessie Vargas, Juan Manuel Lopez, Chad Dawson, Paulie Malignaggi, Ricky Hatton, Kelly Pavlik, Paul Williams and more.