

JULIAN WILLIAMS KNOCKS OUT MARCELLO MATANO, CALLS OUT WORLD CHAMPION JERMALL CHARLO SATURDA

BETHLEHEM, PA. (March 6, 2016) – Julian Williams secured the IBF's No. 1 position at 154 pounds and called out Junior Middleweight World Champion Jermall Charlo after an impressive seventh-round TKO of Italian Marcello Matano Saturday on SHOWTIME from Sands Bethlehem Events Center in Bethlehem, Pa. VIDEO OF WILLIAMS CALLING OUT CHARLO: <http://s.sho.com/1UJo5bp>

The undefeated Philadelphia native put on a clinic, breaking down his opponent from the opening bell until referee Gary Rosato stepped in to protect a defenseless Matano (16-2, 5 KOs) at 2:24 of the seventh. Williams (23-0-1, 14 KOs) utilized a steady diet of combos, jabs and body shots in the middle rounds to weaken Matano and set up the big shots to close the show in the seventh. VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS: <http://s.sho.com/1QzbBBb>

Williams landed 59 percent of his power shots, including a staggering 76 percent in the deciding seventh.

"Maybe people will think they saw a chink in the armor tonight," Williams said. "Maybe guys will come out from under the rock and get some of this West Philly work.

"Jermall has been watching my performances. Him and his brother know exactly who I am. He needs to fight or vacate now. He needs to step up, but he's already laying his groundwork and making excuses.

"Step up and fight me. It's two of the best junior middleweights in the world. It's about greatness. I want to be

great. All of you turkeys at 154 pounds, let's fight."

After the fight, Matano took issue with the stoppage.

"He was pretty fast with his jab, but I felt like I was just getting into the fight," Matano said. "I felt the punch, but I felt like I could have kept going. I have a warrior heart and I never want to quit.

"I'm going to go back to Italy and take a little rest, then I'll be right back in the gym. It was a wonderful experience coming here to America. I got to fight a top-echelon fighter and I feel like I belong."

Avtandil Khurtsidze, a human brick wall barreling forward, upset previously unbeaten middleweight contender Antoine Douglas with a thoroughly dominating 10th-round TKO. VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS: <http://s.sho.com/21er63g>

The 35-year-old "mini-Mike Tyson" plowed forward from the opening bell until the TKO at 0:33 of the 10th. The 6-foot Douglas had no answer for his 5-foot-4 opponent, a Brooklyn-based native of Georgia who is looking to become the first world champion from the former Soviet nation.

Khurtsidze (32-2-2, 21 KOs) hurt Douglas (19-1-1, 13 KOs) with a big left in the opening seconds of the third round, sending the 23-year-old face forward through the ropes. Somehow, Douglas recovered from the first knockdown of his career and fought himself back into the fight. The Washington, D.C., native rallied to win the fourth and the fifth rounds, and the all-action sixth could have gone either way.

Khurtsidze opened the seventh with a monstrous one-punch left to floor Douglas, who again somehow survived the round on failing legs as Khurtsidze threw over 100 total punches. Khurtsidze, who showed unbelievable stamina to push the pressure throughout, started the 10th with a relentless attack, forcing referee Benjy Esteves to stop the fight at

0:33 of the with Douglas defenseless against the ropes.

"I knew he was going to get tired," said Khurtsidze, who took the fight on less than three weeks notice. "I felt like I was going to catch him. He's a good fighter, but he's not strong.

"I knew he was going to be hungry. But I also knew that I was going to beat him. It was short notice but I did everything I could in the time we had. I stayed in the gym and stayed sharp.

"Whoever they put in front me, I'm ready for them. I love fighting. I'll fight anybody."

Douglas had entered the fight as a fast-rising 160-pounder on the cusp of a title shot.

"I feel OK," Douglas told SHOWTIME Sports analyst Steve Farhood after the fight. "He definitely dictated. He definitely had a better day today. It's not discouraging, we just weren't able to execute. Naturally, I'm crushed. It's back to the drawing board."

In the opening bout of the telecast, middleweight contender Tony Harrison looked impressive in a sixth round TKO over former world title challenger Fernando Guerrero.

Harrison (23-1, 19 KOs) was the aggressor from the outset, jabbing at range to set up his favorite weapon – a powerful right. The Detroit native floored Guerrero with a big right with 15 seconds to go in the second round. The southpaw got up, but looked hurt and was saved by the bell.

Guerrero (28-4, 20 KOs) had his moments in the fourth and fifth rounds after some heedful advice from his corner, but he couldn't get inside to escape Harrison's powerful right. It was a clean left hook midway through the sixth that ultimately finished Guerrero. After Harrison dropped Guerrero with the left, the Dominican Republic native beat the count but had no

legs and went back to the canvas after four more consecutive shots from Harrison, forcing referee Gary Rosato to stop the bout at 1:56 of the sixth.

"I threw punches back and I finished the rounds stronger than him," said Harrison, who landed 57 percent of his power shots. "I dominated the fight. My dad kept telling me to put the hook behind the right hand and if I had listened to him better I could have gotten the knockout much quicker.

"I was backing him up. My game plan was to take advantage of the fact that southpaws don't fight well going backwards. I tried to just keep putting him back and discouraging him. I told everyone I was taking the fight to him. What's not to like about me? I'm exciting.

"I want big fights, I want to go back to Detroit and I want the Willie Nelson rematch."

Said Guerrero: "I wasn't on today. He wasn't faster than me, stronger than me or more skilled. I just locked up. I wasn't listening to my corner, I didn't do anything tonight.

"It just happens. Sometimes you have a bad day. Today was as bad as I could ever imagine.

"We'll go back to the drawing board. I didn't do what I was supposed to do. We trained so hard. He wasn't as fast or strong as we thought he'd be. Today was a bad day for me to have a bad day."

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VIDEO: Fernando Guerrero talks about his fight with Tony Harrison

SHOWTIME BOXING: SPECIAL EDITION® OFFICIAL WEIGHTS

IBF 154-Pound Title Eliminator – 12 Rounds

Julian Williams – 154 Pounds

Marcello Matano – 150 $\frac{1}{2}$ Pounds

Middleweight Bout – 10 Rounds (WBO International Middleweight Title)

Antoine Douglas – 158 $\frac{3}{4}$ Pounds

Avtandil Khurtsidze – 160 Pounds

Middleweight Bout – 10 Rounds

Tony Harrison – 156 $\frac{1}{4}$ Pounds

Fernando Guerrero – 156 $\frac{1}{2}$ Pounds

NON TELEVISED BOUTS

Ievgen Khytrov 159.3 – Kenneth McNeil 158.4

Joey Dawejko 242 – Ytalo Perea 250

Amir Shabazz 173. – Hakeem Atkinson 172.2

Chordale Booker 150.4 – Antonio Allen 150.6

Terrence Williams 161.5 – Anthony Miller 159.5

Here is what the fighters had to say Friday

JULIAN WILLIAMS:

"He obviously has a dream, and I have to respect his dream. It's my job to break his dream.

"No one wanted to fight me. But this guy accepted it, he came here and he's in my way.

"This is the biggest fight of my life. I win this and I fight for a title this year.

"People don't want to see us dance around for 12 rounds. They want to see action.

"We opened camp on Nov. 9. We've been waiting for this fight and now it's finally here."

MARCELLO MATANO:

"My dream has always been to fight for the world title. Now, I'm almost there.

"People may not be familiar with me, but champions can be born everywhere.

"On paper, Williams is a better fighter, the favorite. But will he be able to translate his skills in the ring? That's the question. I will be the more active fighter. I'll push the action and frustrate him."

ANTOINE DOUGLAS:

"We're coming to win. With the work we put in, we're ready for anyone. We prepare the same way

"I just plan to go out there and win. Any guy with two hands is dangerous. We just have to fight out fight.

"This guy is so aggressive it's going to hurt him. We know he's going to keep coming but we're going to keep our hands in his face.

"I haven't made it yet. I'm still hungry. I know I need to win this fight to move on to the next step, to get my shot at the title."

AVTANDIL KHURTSIDZE:

"We're going to be aggressive. Once he feels the power he's going to change his game plan. Once we take his jab away it's going to be difficult for him."

"This is a huge opportunity for me. I have to win. Losing isn't an option."

"There's never been a world champ from Georgia. If I win this fight, I'm that much closer to becoming that first champion."

"I sparred with Marcus Browne, (Ievgen) Khytrov, (Sergiy) Derevyanchenko. We had a great camp and now we're ready to fight."

"Mike Tyson is my favorite fighter. I model my style after him."

TONY HARRISON:

"I don't want to leave any questions. I don't want to go 10 rounds with Fernando Guerrero"

"I want to be back to where I was before I lost. To get back where I was, I have to win impressively. I think winning this fight gets me back to where I was."

FERNANDO GUERRERO:

"I haven't felt this good mentally and physically in a while. I'm more well-rounded now."

"This is my natural weight. When I was fighting at middleweight I was always the smaller fighter."

"Tony has some speed and he was a real good amateur, but I'm a veteran professional. I'm going to take him out of his comfort zone."

Saturday, March 5

5:30 p.m. SANDS BETHLEHEM EVENTS CENTER DOORS OPEN

Location: 77 Sands Blvd.; Bethlehem, PA 18015

6:45 p.m. FIRST BOUT

10:00 p.m. SHOWTIME BOXING: SPECIAL EDITION BROADCAST BEGINS

CREDENTIAL DISTRIBUTION

Fight night credentials can be picked up on Saturday, March 5 from 5:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. at the Backstage Entrance. Proper personal photo ID (Driver's license or passport) is required for credential pick-up.

Tickets for the live event, which is promoted by King's Promotions, are priced at \$108, \$83 and \$58, not including applicable service charges and taxes and are on sale now. Tickets are available HERE at www.ticketmaster.com. To charge by phone call Ticketmaster at (800) 745-3000.

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**ANTOINE DOUGLAS TO FACE
AVTANDIL KHURTSIDZE IN MARCH
5 SHOWTIME BOXING: SPECIAL**

EDITION® CO-FEATURE

NEW YORK (Feb. 23, 2016) – Undefeated middleweight contender Antoine Douglas will face hard-hitting Avtandil Khurtsidze in the co-feature of SHOWTIME BOXING: SPECIAL EDITION® on Saturday, March 5, live on SHOWTIME® (10 p.m. ET/PT) from Sands Bethlehem Events Center in Bethlehem, Pa.

Khurtsidze (30-2-2, 20 KOs) steps in to face GH3 Promotions' Douglas (19-0-1, 13 KOs) in a 10-round middleweight bout for the WBO International title after Sam Soliman pulled out of the fight last week with a knee injury.

Khurtsidze, of Brooklyn, N.Y. by way of Kutaisi, Georgia, has won eight straight – including six by knockout – since dropping a controversial decision to then-unbeaten Hassan N'Dam in a bout for the vacant interim WBA World Middleweight Title in Paris in 2010.

Khurtsidze was scheduled to face N'Dam in a rematch last November 21 in Paris, but the event was cancelled following the tragic November 13 terror attacks in France. The rematch with the former world champion was to be contested for the IBF No. 2 spot at 160 pounds.

A pressure fighter, Khurtsidze was also slated to fight last week on a DiBella Entertainment Broadway Boxing event and has been training since the fight with N'Dam was called off. The 36-year-old, who has also campaigned at super middleweight, is coming off a knockout victory over Melvin Betancourt last August.

“Avtandil is a world class guy, a former silver titlist and has been at the top of the division for years,” said Lou DiBella, President of DiBella Entertainment. “This is a great opportunity for him and a huge step up for Douglas. Avtandil had been on his way to France to fight for the No. 2 ranking against N'Dam when the tragic terrorist attacks hit Paris,

which was a terribly unfortunate situation for all. Now, he looks to impress in this fight against the highly regarded Douglas. The winner of this bout moves up significantly in the middleweight world rankings and will be in line for a major fight in the 160-pound division later this year.”

In the main event of the SHOWTIME BOXING: SPECIAL EDITION tripleheader, Julian “J-Rock” Williams and once-beaten Italian Marcello Matano will square off in a 12-round IBF eliminator for the No. 1 ranking at 154 pounds. In the opening bout of the telecast, hard-hitting prospect Tony Harrison will face veteran former world title challenger Fernando Guerrero in a 10-round super welterweight contest.

Tickets for the live event, which is promoted by King’s Promotions, are priced at \$100, \$75 and \$45, not including applicable service charges and taxes and are on sale now. Tickets are available HERE at www.ticketmaster.com. To charge by phone call Ticketmaster at (800) 745-3000.

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UNDEFEATED JULIAN WILLIAMS TO FACE MARCELLO MATANO IN IBF SUPER WELTERWEIGHT ELIMINATOR

SATURDAY, MARCH 5, LIVE ON SHOWTIME®

NEW YORK (Feb. 10, 2016) – Undefeated super welterweight contender Julian “J-Rock” Williams and once-beaten Italian Marcello Matano will square off in a 12-round IBF eliminator for the No. 1 ranking at 154-pounds in the main event of SHOWTIME BOXING: SPECIAL EDITION on Saturday, March 5, live on SHOWTIME (10 p.m. ET/PT) from Sands Bethlehem Events Center in Bethlehem, Pa.

In the co-feature, fast-rising middleweight contender Antoine Douglas will take on former world champion Sam Soliman in a 10-round middleweight bout. In the opening bout of the telecast, hard-hitting prospect Tony Harrison will face veteran former world title challenger Fernando Guerrero in a 10-round super welterweight contest.

“This upcoming fight will be the biggest fight of my career,” Williams said. “I’m chomping at the bit to get back out there. I am taking my opponent very seriously and I refuse to let Marcello Matano stop me from being a world champion.”

“This is a dream come true,” said Matano. “I’ve been working for my whole life for a real opportunity to make to the top level and I will not let Julian Williams take it away. What will happen when Williams has to go to the championship rounds? Will he be ready? I know for sure that I will. This is the opportunity of a lifetime and I will do all I can to grab it.”

“Facing a former world champion like Sam Soliman is a great opportunity for me,” Douglas said. “The plan has always been to keep moving forward, and to do it successfully. This is that next step, and I’m ready for it. I’ve grown and learned so much fighting on ShoBox and it’s a beautiful thing to

continue to progress and move to the next level.”

“This is an important fight for me,” said Soliman. “I had three opportunities on the table and I chose Douglas believing it to be a better fight for ranking, and it’s a challenge I’m excited to take on. From what I have seen, Douglas is a very talented fighter, which will make for a good fight. I am in great shape and looking forward to fight night.”

“I’m excited and eager to showcase my abilities to the world again,” said Harrison. “I’d advise fans to arrive early because I don’t plan to be in the ring long. I’m knocking this guy out. I know Guerrero is coming in with a chip on his shoulder and I can’t overlook him. I brought my uncle into camp and I think that’s going to give me the edge that I’ve needed to get over the hump. I’m putting the whole division on notice!”

“It’s warrior time,” said Guerrero. “We are going to have a war. This is going to be non-stop action. This fight will lead to big things for me. I’m used to fighting guys that are bigger than I am. I’m at my more natural weight and I’m looking to do great things in this division.”

“I’m thrilled to promote this great show on March 5,” said Marshall Kauffman of King’s Promotions. “This is a great card from top to bottom with some future champions looking to show the world that they are ready for the next level. I am honored to have Julian Williams headline this card. He put on an explosive performance in his last bout at the Sands and I am sure he will be looking to do the same on March 5.”

Tickets for the live event, which is promoted by King’s Promotions, are priced at \$100, \$75 and \$45, not including applicable service charges and taxes and are on sale now. Tickets are available HERE at www.ticketmaster.com. To charge by phone call Ticketmaster at (800) 745-3000.

One of the most promising and highly regarded young stars in

boxing, Williams (21-0-1, 1 ND, 13 KOs) will headline for the first time on SHOWTIME. He's stepping up after honing his skills and steadily ascending the ranks after five fights on SHO EXTREME. The 25-year-old shut out longtime contender Joey Hernandez last April, followed that with a sixth-round stoppage of Arman Ovsepyan in June and closed the year by stopping Orlando Lora in the first round in September. The Philadelphian has also picked up victories over Joachim Alcine, Eliezer Gonzalez and Freddy Hernandez in his young career and looks to earn his first title shot with a win on March 5.

Matano (16-1, 5 KOs) is a former Italian super welterweight titlist. He's registered four consecutive wins since the only loss of his career, including victories in three scheduled 12-round fights. The 29-year-old is coming off a 12-round unanimous decision over fellow-Italian Nick Klappert in October 2015. Like Williams, he fought three bouts in 2015, although he logged 31 total rounds compared to just 17 for Williams.

Douglas (19-0-1, 13 KOs) has been impressive in five consecutive victories since he boxed to a draw when he was just 21 years old with former world title challenger Michel Soro in July 2014. The former top amateur has won his last three fights by knockout, including a sixth-round KO of previously undefeated Thomas LaManna and a fourth-round TKO of veteran Les Sherrington last November in his fifth appearance on ShoBox: The New Generation. On the prospect developmental series, the 23-year-old Douglas has graduated from unproven prospect to undefeated contender and is now ranked No. 4 in the WBO and No. 6 in the WBA. Douglas is promoted by GH3 promotions.

Soliman (44-13, 1 NC, 18 KOs), of Melbourne, Australia, is vastly more experienced than Douglas, having competed in four world championship fights. The 42-year-old held the IBF Middleweight World title before suffering a debilitating knee

injury and losing via decision to Jermain Taylor in his first title defense in October 2014. Soliman, who is 9-2-1 since 2008, won the IBF crown with a decisive 12-round decision over Felix Sturm in 2014. The Australian, who fights at a relentless pace and can be awkward at times, will look to bounce back from a close, 10-round split decision loss to Dominic Wade last June on ShoBox.

At just 25-years-old, Harrison (22-1, 18 KOs) has showed tremendous promise as he recorded a 10-fight knockout streak from 2013 to 2015 and proved he could recover from a loss when he dominated Cecil McCalla for 10-rounds in October. The Detroit-native will look to make it back-to-back victories as he continues his ascent towards championship contender status. He has picked up knockout victories over Antwone Smith, Tyrone Brunson, Bronco McKart and Pablo Munguia in the last two years.

A former world title challenger, Guerrero (28-3, 20 KOs) returned to his winning ways in 2015 with victories over Abraham Han and Daniel Souza Santos. The 29-year-old lives and trains out of Los Angeles but grew up in Maryland after being born in the Dominican Republic. The veteran owns victories over Ishe Smith, Derrick Findley and Gabriel Rosado in a pro career that dates back to 2007.

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