

# Tapia Defeats Lebron in 10-round War to Win WBC Continental Super Featherweight Title in Philadelphia

Philadelphia (March 14, 2022)—Christian Tapia outlasted Luis Lebron via 10-round unanimous decision to capture the WBC Continental Super Featherweight title in a bout that exceeded the pre-fight hype that took place in front of a capacity crowd at Live! Event Center at Live! Casino Hotel Philadelphia.

The fight topped a terrific card that was promoted by Hard Hitting Promotions.

Early on, it looked like it was going to be Lebron's night as he hurt Tapia badly as he landed a flush left hook to the side of the head. Tapia was rocked and held on for the balance of the frame. Tapia regained his composure, and was able to start landing some nice overhand rights. Tapia started to get into a rhythm, and was able to land left hooks to the body that started to slow Lebron down. Lebron would not go quietly into the night as he was able to force Tapia into some furious exchanges, which thrilled the sold-out crowd. Many of the rounds were close, and it was the accuracy and harder punch of Tapia that opened up a cut under the left eye of Lebron, which proved to be the difference of the fight as the Coamo, Puerto Rico native won by scores of 99-91, 98-92 and 97-93.

Tapia wins the WBC Continental Super Featherweight title, and raises his record to 14-0. Lebron of San Juan, Puerto Rico is 18-3.

In the co-feature, Brandon Pizarro landed a hard left hook to the head of Vitor Jones Freitas that sent the Brazilian visitor down and out at 1:18 of round four of their scheduled eight-round welterweight bout.

Pizarro of Philadelphia is 17-1 with 10 knockouts. Jones is 16-7.

Ryan Pino took a six-round majority decision over previously undefeated Dezmond Lucas in a welterweight bout.

Pino of San Juan Puerto Rico won by scores of 59-55, 58-56 and 57-57 to raise his mark to 11-7-2. Lucas of Bronx, New York is 5-1.

Jan Carlos Rivera put on a solid boxing performance to win a six-round unanimous decision over Michael Ogundo in a welterweight clash.

Rivera of Philadelphia won by shutout tallies of 60-54 on all cards and is now 5-1. Ogundo of Quincy, Massachusetts is 16-14.

Good looking Jeffrey Villanueva made a successful pro debut with a four-round unanimous decision over Juan Gutierrez in super flyweight bout.

Villanueva drove Gutierrez into the ropes for a knockdown in the opening frame. Gutierrez fought back hard and the two had several good exchanges throughout the fight, but Villanueva was able to drop Gutierrez down in the final frame, and won by scores of 40-34 on all cards.

Villanueva of Allentown, PA is 1-0. Gutierrez of Emiale, Nicaragua is 0-1.

Derrick Vann was able to use an unorthodox style to register two knockdowns and take a four-round unanimous decision over previously undefeated Brendan O'Callaghan in a battle of Philadelphia based middleweights.

Vann scored knockdowns in rounds one and four and was able to win by scores of 39-36 and 38-36 and is now 1-0. O'Callaghan is 2-1.

Cesar Espinel Maldonado landed a booming left hook that sent Anthony Ramirez down and out at 2:52 of round one of their scheduled four-round welterweight bout.

The left hook sent Ramirez down face-first thudding off the canvas. Somehow Ramirez got to his feet, but he was wobbling all over the place and the bout was stopped.

Espinel of Arecibo, Puerto Rico is 1-2 with one knockout. Ramirez of Philadelphia is 0-2.

The card was fought in front of boxing royalty as former two-division world champion Danny Garcia, Jaron Ennis, Chris Colbert, Ray Robinson, Christian Carto, Sonny Conto and more were in attendance.

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## **Q&A WITH STEVE “SUPERMAN” BUJAJ**

CORONA, Calif. (Nov. 2, 2016) – Undefeated ultra-confident cruiserweight Steve “Superman” Bujaj (16-0-1, 11 KOs), of Westchester, N.Y., chimes in before his important 10-round bout with fellow unbeaten Constantin Bejenaru (11-0, 3 KOs, 0-1-1 in the World Series of Boxing), of Brooklyn, N.Y., in the middle match of a ShoBox: The New Generation tripleheader this Friday, Nov. 4, from the Omega Products Event Center in Corona, Calif.

Bujaj (pronounced “Boo-ha”), 26, has won four in a row,

including his last two by knockout, since boxing a split 10-round draw in a slugfest with then-undefeated three-time Chicago Golden Gloves champion Junior Wright (10-0) in May 2014. A two-time New York Golden Gloves champion, Bujah, who'll be fighting on ShoBox the first time, is coming off a first-round TKO over previously undefeated Sergio Ramirez (11-0) on June 11

Bejenaru (pronounced "bay-zhin-nah-R00") is making his second ShoBox start. In his debut last April 15, the native of Ungheni, Moldova, scored a unanimous eight-round decision over previously unbeaten Alexey Zubov (10-0), a former Russian amateur champion and seven-time European amateur champion. Southpaw Bejenaru boxed on the Romanian national team for 10 years and was a nine-time national champion.

Here is What Bujaj said:

What do you know about Bejenaru and what are your thoughts going in?

"I know he's undefeated, 11-0 and a lefty, but I don't believe he's on my level. I think I'm a different class fighter and will be able to show it on Friday."

What kind of fight do you expect?

"I don't really have any expectations. When I get in there, I make my adjustments, and then I start breaking him down."

What is the key to winning? What are your advantages?

"My best advantage is my experience. I've fought 10 rounds before. This is his first time. I believe that I'm more skilled than he is, and I believe that I have more heart and just think I have the edge all around."

On fighting on ShoBox the first time?

"I'm very excited and grateful for the opportunity that has

been given me. I'm ready to go out and perform and show the world what I'm all about – and that is being one of the top guys in the cruiserweight division.”

Your opinion on the cruiserweight division?

“The cruiserweight division is a good division with a lot of good fighters. I feel like it will get more exposure in the future because there are so many talented fighters and good fights that can happen. I'm looking forward to being a part some of the big fights and making some noise.”

What would a win on ShoBox mean to you?

“A win on SHOWTIME would be really huge, but mostly it would keep me going.”

Are they making a mistake fighting you?

“I don't think he made a mistake, but I refuse to lose this fight. I'm gonna give it my all. He's not on my level and I'm gonna prove it. I'm gonna fight my ass off.”

On his slugfest with former world title challenger Wright?

“I was winning the fight but I broke my jaw in the fourth round. I had a bad mouthpiece, a cheap one. I never knew mouthpieces needed to be fitted. The surgeon told me if I'd had a pro mouthpiece, I wouldn't have had a problem.

“I still believe anybody else would have quit in that fight. I was in a lot of pain, I couldn't close my mouth because the jaw was broke, I was spitting out blood. But I hung in there despite the jaw.

“I had him out on his feet in the last half-minute or so but the referee stopped the fight to give him time to tape up one of the laces on his glove. That gave him time to recover. If the ref hadn't stopped it when he did, I feel I would have knocked him out.”

On his career?

"I had to work hard for my career. I don't have a padded record. I do not have it as easy as most in their career. I don't have a big-time promoter, and I'm not pampered. I've fought tough guys throughout my career but I've learned a lot and have no regrets. But I feel it's time for me to step up. After I win Friday on ShoBox, a lot of doors should start opening up me."

New Nickname?

"I've been known as 'Superman' my whole career but I'm thinking of changing it to "Steel." The Wright fight proved a lot of me, and I learned a lot. I didn't quit. I'm very tough and strong-minded, made of 'steel.'"

Bujaj vs. Bejenaru is scheduled for 10 rounds and will be part of a ShoBox: The New Generation tripleheader live on SHOWTIME at 10:30 p.m. ET/PT (delayed on the West Coast). The main event will feature undefeated welterweight Taras Shelestyuk (14-0, 9 KO's) taking on upset-minded Jimmy Herrera (15-3-1, 8 KO's). Opening up the broadcast will feature Unbeaten lightweight Vitor Jones Freitas (12-0, 1 ND, 6 KOs), of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, will be opposed by local fan favorite Manuel Mendez (12-1-2, 8 KOs), of Indio, Calif., in an eight-round bout in the opening bout of the telecast. Freitas, 23, is the nephew of popular former two-time lightweight world champion and Brazilian legend Acelino "Popo" Freitas.

Tickets for the event promoted by Banner Promotions, Thompson Boxing, Hitz Boxing and Joe DeGuardia's Star Boxing are priced at \$100 (ringside), \$70 (reserved) and \$50 (general admission) and can be purchased by calling (714) 935-0900.

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 Rich Gaughan producing and Rick Phillips directing.

## 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 67 fighters who have appeared on ShoBox and advanced to garner world titles includes: Andre Ward, Deontay Wilder, Erislandy Lara, Shawn Porter, Gary Russell Jr., Lamont Peterson, Guillermo Rigondeaux, Omar Figueroa, 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.

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# **INDIO'S MANUEL MENDEZ IS READY FOR TV DEBUT AGAINST UNDEFEATED VITOR JONES FREITAS ON SHOBOX: THE NEW GENERATION TRIPLEHEADER THIS FRIDAY, NOV. 4, LIVE ON SHOWTIME®**

ORANGE, Calif. (Nov. 2, 2016) – Hard-hitting lightweight prospect Manuel Mendez (12-1-2, 8 KOs) makes his U.S. television debut against unbeaten Vitor Jones Freitas (12-0, 6

KOs) this Friday, Nov. 4, from the Omega Products Event Center in Corona, Calif.

Freitas vs. Mendez is scheduled for eight rounds and kicks off a ShoBox: The New Generation tripleheader live on SHOWTIME at 10:30 p.m. ET/PT (delayed on the West Coast).

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Mendez, who is trained by the well-regarded Joel Diaz, is putting the finishing touches on a training camp that saw him spar against former world champions Victor Ortiz, Ruslan Provodnikov and elite prospect Vergil Ortiz.

Thompson Boxing caught up with the 26-year-old slugger from Indio, Calif. and got his take on this Friday's ShoBox fight.

(On your first time fighting in front of a nationally televised audience) ...

"It's a great opportunity. I always push myself to the limits and this fight is no different. I have a fan-friendly style that the SHOWTIME audience is going to love."

(On paper your fight against Freitas appears evenly matched, but most are giving the upper hand to your opponent) ...

"I've always been the underdog all my life so this is another shot to prove myself. Freitas has a famous name, but that's about it. He hasn't faced anyone that approaches my ability."

(On what you expect from Freitas) ...

"The first few rounds will go a long way in knowing what he has. From watching tape, it seems like he has speed, but the most important thing is gauging his power. I can take a punch so once I feel him connect with something, then I'll know what



he has to offer.”

(On your relationship with Joel Diaz) ...

“We have an excellent relationship. He’s incredibly helpful in that I’ve seen a great deal of improvement since I’ve been with him. Everything is better. My conditioning, head movement, footwork; I’ve improved in a lot of areas. He’s a great teacher.”

(How would you describe your style for those that have yet to see you fight?) ...

“I’m a smart boxer that pressures fighters into making mistakes. I have all the tools needed to wear down opponents. You’ll always see me in front of you to the point where you get annoyed and start making mental errors. That’s when I put the hurt on you.”

## TV FIGHTS

Undefeated 2012 Olympic Bronze Medalist Taras “Real Deal” Shelestyuk (14-0, 9 KOs) will face upset-minded Jaime Herrera in the 10-round welterweight main event of a ShoBox: The New Generation tripleheader on Friday, Nov. 4, live on SHOWTIME at 10:30 p.m. ET/PT (delayed on the West Coast) from Omega Products International Event Center in Corona, Calif.

In the co-feature, undefeated cruiserweights Constantin Bejenaru (11-0, 4 KOs, 0-1-1 in World Series of Boxing), of Catskill, N.Y. by way of Moldova, and Stivens “Superman” Bujaj (16-0-1, 11 KOs), of New York, will collide in a 10-rounder for the vacant WBC International and WBC Continental Americas titles.

In the opening bout of the telecast, undefeated lightweight Vitor Jones Freitas (12-0, 1 ND, 6 KOs), of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, will be opposed by local fan favorite Manuel Mendez (12-1-2, 8 KOs), of Indio, Calif., in an eight-round bout. The

23-year-old Freitas is the nephew of popular former two-time lightweight world champion Acelino “Popo” Freitas.

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## **Q&A WITH JIMMY “THE TRUTH” HERRERA**

NEW YORK (Nov. 1, 2016) – Jimmy “The Truth” Herrera is accustomed to entering the ring as an underdog. The Chicago native is experienced in fighting favored prospects and contenders on the road and has had an inordinate success in these types of matchups, having defeated unbeaten prospects in four of his last nine fights.

So don’t expect Herrera (15-3-1, 8 KOs) to be in awe of his opponent, former Ukraine amateur standout and rising star, Taras Shelestyuk (14-0, 9 KOs) when they meet this Friday, Nov. 4, in the 10-round welterweight main event on ShoBox: The New Generation live on SHOWTIME® (10:30 p.m. ET/PT, delayed on the West Coast) at Omega Products Event Center in Corona, Calif.

The 5-foot-10, 27-year-old Herrera has won three in a row and is 8-1-1 since dropping a close eight-round decision to Adrian Granados in February 2012. One of those victories was an upset seventh-round TKO over one-time highly ranked welterweight and world title challenger Mike “Machine Gun” Jones on Aug. 23, 2014.

Herrera is promoted by Hitz Boxing and co-managed by Cameron Dunkin and Mike Cericola.

Here are Herrera’s responses to a recent Q&A:

What are your thoughts going into your ShoBox debut?

"I'm always up for a challenge, so I'm really excited about this opportunity. I'm definitely ready to compete against another undefeated fighter. I'm coming to show my skills to the world and prove I'm a boxer you have to pay attention to.

"At this point of my career, I want to make a move fast while I'm young. I don't just want to be a guy with a nice record. I truly believe in my skills and that I can reach the highest level.

"I've been getting great help with sparring with the best of the best in Chicago. Sam Colonna, George Hernandez and all the Chicago boxing coaches have been great mentors to me and I am very thankful."

What do you know about Shelestyuk?

"He was a great amateur fighter and he's a lefty. That's pretty much all I need to know. The only thing I can give him is that he has experience, so I've got to be careful of that. But it's nothing new – I've seen fighters like that."

What kind of fight do you expect?

"I expect him to be a boxer with movement. I think he'll try to box me. I'll be coming forward, being aggressive. Then, we'll see what his game plan is."

What is the key to winning?

"It all depends on the pressure I can apply, throwing the right punches at the right time, the accuracy of my punches. Each punch has to have a purpose. I'm definitely more of a pressure guy. I like Gennady Golovkin's style, Julio Cesar Chavez is my idol. That is the kind of style I try to fight with."

On fighting on ShoBox for the first time?

"I'm definitely excited because I know a lot of people will be watching. I'm not nervous at all. The cameras, the bright lights, honestly, I don't care about. My focus is totally on

this fight. This is the type of fight that can open a lot of doors for me.”

Is this your biggest fight and do you feel pressure?

“Yes, definitely, this is my biggest fight – just for all the doors a win would open for me, all the possibilities. There’s no pressure on me. He’s the one representing his country with the weight on his shoulders. I’ve lost before, but that doesn’t make me an opponent.”

Are they making a mistake fighting you??

“I feel like they are making a mistake, but I also feel this is going to be a good test for him. I think Taras took the fight more for himself. But if he doesn’t know now about me, he’s going to find out.”

You boxed amateurs for one year and had 25 bouts. He was a 2012 Olympic Bronze Medalist with a boatload of amateur accomplishments. How significant is the experience of fighting amateur?

“Personally, to me, the amateurs are not that important at all. It’s all irrelevant once you go pro. I know some great amateur boxers who made it after turning pro, and some who didn’t. It’s a whole different ballgame. As a pro, I believe I’ve fought better guys than he has. I’ve been tested way more than he has. You can’t take away what he did as an amateur, but fighting with the smaller gloves, with no headgear, is totally different.”

Undefeated cruiserweights Constantin Bejenaru (11-0, 4 KOs, 0-1-1 in World Series of Boxing), of Catskill, N.Y. by way of Moldova, and Steve “Superman” Bujaj (16-0-1, 11 KOs), of New York, will collide in a 10-rounder for the vacant WBC International WBC Continental Americas titles in the co-feature.

The nephew of popular former two-time lightweight world champion Acelino “Popo” Freitas, undefeated lightweight Vitor

Jones Freitas (12-0, 1 ND, 6 KOs), of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, will be opposed by local fan favorite Manuel Mendez (12-1-2, 8 KOs), of Indio, Calif., in an eight-round bout in the opening match of the telecast.

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# UNBEATEN TARAS SHELESTYUK WINDING DOWN TRAINING FOR HIS SHOBOX: THE NEW GENERATION MAIN EVENT DEBUT AGAINST JIMMY HERRERA THIS FRIDAY LIVE ON SHOWTIME®

NEW YORK (Oct. 31, 2016) – Promising unbeaten 2012 Olympic Games Bronze Medalist Taras “Real Deal” Shelestyuk (14-0, 9 KOs) will make his main event debut when he faces upset-minded Jimmy Herrera in the 10-round featured attraction of a ShoBox: The New Generation tripleheader this Friday, Nov. 4, live on SHOWTIME at 10:30 p.m. ET/PT (delayed on the West Coast) from Omega Products International Event Center in Corona, Calif.

A 5-foot-10 up-and-coming rising star, Shelestyuk, of Los Angeles, is ranked No. 9 by the WBO and No. 13 in the WBA. Shelestyuk, who is making his second ShoBox start, averaged 85 punches a round en route to winning his ShoBoxdebut with a 10-round division over Aslanbek Kozaev on Nov. 6, 2015.

The dedicated, hard-working Shelestyuk, who is trained by Eric Brown and spars a few days a week with former world champion Shane Mosley, at Wild Card West in Santa Monica, Calif., possesses solid skills, movement and punching power.

Shelestyuk was a member of a vaunted 2012 Ukrainian Olympic team that included featherweight gold medalist Vasyl Lomachenko and heavyweight gold medalist Oleksandr Usyk. The 30-year-old feels he’s still about a year away from competing against the best at 147 pounds and that he first must get by Herrera. But Mosley claims Shelestyuk reminds him of a bigger Lomachencko and believes he’s already ready for the top names

in the welterweight division.

Herrera (15-3-1, 8 KOs), of Chicago, Ill., has defeated unbeaten prospects in four of last nine fights and is 8-1-1 overall since July 2012.

Shelestyuk, Brown and Mosley spoke to SHOWTIME after a recent workout. Here's what they said:

TARAS SHELESTYUK:

What are your thoughts going into the fight?

"I'm very excited. It's been six months since my last fight. It's my first headline fight and hopefully not my last one.

"I've been putting in a lot of work in my training camp with my trainer Eric Brown, and with my physical conditioning coach. My opponent is a tough fighter. He's had some good fights with guys like Mike Jones, Egidijus Kavaliauskas and a couple of other big guys. He likes to fight and I think it will be a good fight and a good matchup for our styles."

You're now a ranked fighter; are you happy with the pace of your progression?

"I'm happy with my progression but of course I want to fight bigger names in championship fights and all of that. I know it's coming soon. I enjoy my way of training and developing my skills, but if you see your dream you do anything to reach it and don't let anything get in your way."

What do you think of the welterweight division?

"It's a very good division because there are a lot of fighters, but some don't want to fight each other (very often). There are some very good championship fights to be made and hopefully I will be one of them."

Why did you chose to move to Southern California?

"Well, [laughs] mainly because of the great weather, but this is also a good area with a lot of good fighters and a lot of good trainers as well. When I first moved here my manager

invited me out and showed me around and I got in the gym right away. I was training with Ruslan Provodnikov and got some sparring in with him before a fight that he had and next thing you know, two weeks later I had my pro debut and now three-and-a-half years later here I am."

Is there pressure on you when you fight?

"I wouldn't say I feel pressure because everyone around me is supporting me, they believe in me and I believe in them. My team believes in me and I trust them. I just want to do what I do in the ring, better. I want to do better for me, for my family and for my friends."

Do you follow your Olympic teammates?

"I watch fights of the Ukrainian Olympic Team, and I enjoy when the other guys win. We support each other and we call each other. It is good for there to be more Ukraine fighters who are champions now. Next year, I hope to be one of them."

How did it feel going 10 rounds for the first time?

"Last year in November I had my first 10-round fight on ShoBox, I fought with a strong guy and he gave me a very good fight. I went the 10 rounds and I felt like I could still go two more. I am ready for 10, for 12, it doesn't matter. I feel much better, much more powerful. I have more speed than I had in my last fight, too."

How did you end up training with Eric?

"I trained with Freddie Roach for about two and a half years when I met Eric at Wild Card West Gym. I started sparring with some of his guys there. After my fight with Rodriguez on ESPN in 2015 I asked Eric to train me and we started working. Now that I've fought two fights with him as my trainer, I feel my boxing skills are better, I feel more powerful and I enjoy training in his gym."

"All of the trainers help us and they give us advice. On the days I spar with Shane Mosley he stops and gives me some



advice. I learn a lot from him, being the fighting legend that he is. I grew up watching him fight as a kid and respect what he's able to teach me. Then the next time I try what he has taught me and it works."

Boxing is in your blood; your dad and brother boxed. When you were younger, did you think you were going to become a fighter?

"No, but my father pushed me in a lot of sports. I did gymnastics, soccer for five years, and played chess. I fought as a kid but it was always friendly. I always enjoyed the training aspect. To train for soccer sometimes my father and I would run barefoot in the snow and I enjoyed it. So, as a kid, when I first stepped into the boxing gym, it was just so much fun."

Your ShoBox fight falls on your father's birthday; do you have a special present in mind for him?

"It makes me want to get the victory for him. On his day, he will be sitting and watching my fight so I want to get that victory for him, for my family and for the Ukraine."

ERIC BROWN, Shelestyuk's trainer

What kind of camp has Taras had and what do you see happening on Friday?

"I see a lot of progression in Taras. When we first started working together, one of the things was that Taras always had great boxing ability, but he wasn't a great finisher. I don't know if he was gun shy or what it was but he had a tendency of using his talent to get people in trouble but then he would stand back and let them get back in the fight. So, what we've been working on a lot more is getting him to become a better finisher and recognize when he has his man in trouble and how to seize the moment, without being reckless at the same time. He's improving at a fast pace."

"A lot of guys from Ukraine seem to have similar tendencies because they have long amateur careers and they start picking

up bad habits that we need to correct. Taras had a little bit of that in him but he seems to be making the adjustments very well. He's an extremely hard worker and you often have to tell him to slow down, you never have to tell him to do more."

Where do you see him in his career as a welterweight?

"It's a great division. I'd say that Keith Thurman tops it without a doubt now but there are good fighters like Shawn Porter too. If Mayweather decided to come back, I think he would be all over this division again. Canelo is a good super welterweight, but he's too busy worrying about catch-weights. Undoubtedly in another year, I think Taras will be right there with the best of them. He's got a lot of talent, great versatility, great hand speed and foot speed and he's a good puncher. Not a devastating knockout puncher but a great puncher nonetheless with both hands."

SHANE MOSLEY, Former World Champion

How has it been working with Taras and how did you become involved in his training?

"I have been sparring with Taras and he's looking really sharp. I've been sparring with him for about four or five months now pretty consistently because a lot of guys won't spar with him. Guys are worried that he will make them look bad; he's so technical and sharp that they don't want to spar with him. So, I go in there with him a lot. It's hard to get people to spar with him."

Where do you see him in the welterweight division?

"He's on that championship path, that level, but I think once he gets there, he'll get more sparring partners and will get even better. He really is a world champion, a world-class fighter. He reminds me of a bigger Lomachenko, sparring with him is just like that. I see him as a top welterweight champion. The way he throws his combinations, he's a smart boxer who works out very hard. He's at the gym every single day, whether he's sparring or not, whether he has some training to do or not. He'll even be here by himself just

moving around and staying sharp. His work ethic is really, really strong.

How do you like working with Taras?

"I like Taras and I enjoy working with him. He's extremely dedicated and that's hard to find. I like Taras' work ethic, his personality, how he takes to boxing. He loves this sport and he wants to be the best. He doesn't like to lose, even in sparring. I'm impressed with him. When I sparred with him for the first time I was very impressed at his swing, his power, his ring accuracy, his IQ of boxing. I was impressed with how hard he worked and his willingness to learn."

Do you find it unusual for guys to be as dedicated as Taras at this point in their careers?

"It's unusual in the sense that a lot of fighters want to learn from the top guys but it seems to me with Taras that it's not fake. He truly does want to learn about boxing so that he can be the best. He wants to become a world champion and is working to become one of the best. If you put Taras in the ring with any big name today and I'd say he would take the victory. He has a sound mind. He has the mentality to be at the top. He's serious about being the world champion, about being the top fighter. He's serious about winning and he's going to take it all the way to the end. If you put this guy against Thurman, I'd go with him. I think he beats Thurman right now."

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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 67 fighters who have appeared on ShoBox and advanced to garner world titles includes: Andre Ward, Deontay Wilder, Erislandy Lara, Shawn Porter, Gary Russell Jr., Lamont Peterson, Guillermo Rigondeaux, Omar Figueroa, 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.

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# World ranked lightweight

# **Xolisani Ndongeni & featherweight super prospect Ruben Villa headline undercard on Friday, November 4**

Philadelphia, PA./Corona CA. (Oct. 25, 2016) – World ranked lightweight contender Xolisani Ndongeni and highly regarded featherweight prospect Ruben Villa will headline a terrific undercard on Friday night, November 4th at the Omega Products International Events Center in Corona, California.

Ndongeni of East Cape, South Africa has a record of 21-0 with 11 knockouts and is ranked number-2 by the WBA.

The 26 year-old will be making his American debut against Juan Garcia Mendez (19-1-1, 12 K0's) of Mexicali, Mexico in a bout scheduled for ten-rounds.

Ndongeni turned professional in 2010 and is the IBF Lightweight champion and former South African Super Featherweight & Lightweight champion. Among his 21 wins is a win over former world champion Mzonke Fana. In his last bout, Ndongeni scored a 1st round stoppage over Emilio Norfat on April 22nd in East London, South Africa.

Ndongeni is promoted by Rodney Berman's Golden Gloves Promotions.

Mendez, 24 years-old, is a 7 year professional, and is on a five-fight winning streak. In his last bout, Mendez stopped Roman Mendez in 1 round on May 29, 2015 in Mexicali, Mexico.

Villa of Salinas, California has a record of 2-0 with 2 1st-

round knockouts.

The 19 year-old was a two-time National Golden Glove Champion, 2-time Jr. Olympics Champion, and 2015 Olympic Trials runner-up, and he holds two victories over 2016 Olympic silver medal winner Shakur Stevenson.

He turned professional on July 29th with a 1st round stoppage over Gerardo Molina. Villa followed that up with a first round stoppage over Jose Mora on September 23rd in Ontario, California.

Villa's opponent in the scheduled four-round bout will be announced shortly.

In a 4-round super flyweight bout, Danny Andujo (2-0, 1 K0) of Temcula, California will battle Joel Cano (0-3) of Ciudad, Mexico.

Jonathan Esquivel of Anaheim, California will make his pro debut against an opponent to be named in a middleweight bout.

Tickets for the event promoted by Banner Promotions & Thompson, are priced at \$100 (ringside), \$70 (reserved) and \$50 (general admission) and can be purchased by calling (714) 935-0900.

Undefeated 2012 Olympic Bronze Medalist Taras "Real Deal" Shelestyuk (14-0, 9 K0s) will face upset-minded Jaime Herrera in the 10-round welterweight main event of a ShoBox: The New Generation tripleheader on, live on SHOWTIME at 10:30 p.m. ET/PT (delayed on the West Coast).

In the co-feature, undefeated cruiserweights Constantin Bejenaru (11-0, 4 K0s, 0-1-1 in World Series of Boxing), of Catskill, NY by way of Moldova, and Stivens "Superman" Bujaj (16-0-1, 11 K0s), of New York, will collide in a 10-rounder for the vacant WBC International and WBC Continental Americas titles.

In the opening bout of the telecast, undefeated lightweight Vitor Jones Freitas (12-0, 1 ND, 6 KOs), of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, will be opposed by local fan favorite Manuel Mendez (12-1-2, 8 KOs), of Indio, CA, in an 8-round bout. The 23-year-old Freitas is the nephew of popular former four-time world champion Acelino "Popo" Freitas.

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 Rich Gaughan producing and Rick Phillips directing.

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**UNDEFEATED**

**UKRAINIAN**

# **WELTERWEIGHT TARAS SHELESTYUK FACES UPSET-MINDED JAIME HERRERA IN MAIN EVENT OF SHOBOX: THE NEW GENERATION TRIPLEHEADER FRIDAY, NOV. 4, LIVE ON SHOWTIME®**

NEW YORK (Oct. 13, 2016) – Undefeated 2012 Olympic Bronze Medalist Taras “Real Deal” Shelestyuk (14-0, 9 KOs) will face upset-minded Jaime Herrera in the 10-round welterweight main event of a ShoBox: The New Generation tripleheader on Friday, Nov. 4, live on SHOWTIME at 10:30 p.m. ET/PT (delayed on the West Coast) from Omega Products International Event Center in Corona, Calif.

Shelestyuk (14-0, 9 KOs), of Los Angeles by way of the Ukraine, was a member of a 2012 Ukrainian Olympic team that included featherweight gold medalist Vasyl Lomachenko and heavyweight gold medalist Oleksandr Usyk. Jaime Herrera (15-3-1, 8 KOs), of Chicago, Ill., has defeated unbeaten prospects in four of last nine fights and is 8-1-1 overall since July 2012.

In the co-feature, undefeated cruiserweights Constantin Bejenaru (11-0, 4 KOs, 0-1-1 in World Series of Boxing), of Catskill, N.Y. by way of Moldova, and Stivens “Superman” Bujaj (16-0-1, 11 KOs), of New York, will collide in a 10-rounder for the vacant WBC International and WBC Continental Americas titles.

In the opening bout of the telecast, undefeated lightweight Vitor Jones Freitas (12-0, 1 ND, 6 KOs), of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, will be opposed by local fan favorite Manuel Mendez



(12-1-2, 8 KOs), of Indio, Calif., in an eight-round bout. The 23-year-old Freitas is the nephew of popular former two-time lightweight world champion Acelino "Popo" Freitas.

Four of the six fighters on the distinctly international tripleheader will risk their unbeaten records against what likely will be their toughest assignments to date. Shelestyuk and Bejanaru will be making their second ShoBox starts. It's also the second time ShoBox has aired from Omega. The first took place Oct. 5, 2007, and featured victories by Yonhhy Perez and Mickey Bey Jr., who would both go on to become world champions, two of the 67 boxers on ShoBox to do so.

Tickets for the event promoted by Banner Promotions are priced at \$100 (ringside), \$70 (reserved) and \$50 (general admission) and can be purchased by calling (714) 935-0900.

Taras Shelestyuk VS. Jaime Herrera – 10-Round Welterweight Main Event

Taras Shelestyuk (pronounced "TARE-as SHELL-es-took) averaged 85 punches per round in his ShoBox debut last November, winning an impressive 10-round unanimous decision over Aslanbek Kozaev. In his most recent start and lone outing this year last May 20, the 5-foot-10, 30-year-old Shelestyuk knocked out Erick Martinez in the third round at Ontario, Calif.

"My training is going great, I am more powerful and my speed is better," said the former international standout. "Herrera is a rough fighter, but it doesn't matter to me because I am looking to step up and get into championship level fights."

Shelestyuk, who is trained by Eric Brown at Wild Card West, possesses solid skills, movement and punching power. Since turning pro in March 2013 he has exclusively campaigned in the United States. Many from the outstanding 2012 Ukrainian Olympic team became immediate prospects as professionals, including Lomachenko, who won a featherweight world

championship in just his third fight on SHOWTIME. Now, it's Shelestyuk's turn to step up to the plate.

"I follow the 2012 Ukrainian Olympic team, and all the guys are doing very well and I'm happy for them," said Shelestyuk, who went 300-15 in the amateurs. "But I do not compare my results with anybody else because I have my own career and my own path to a championship belt, and I am enjoying this journey."

Herrera, a pro since December 2009, seems to be a legitimate test for Shelestyuk. Herrera has won three straight, defeated undefeated prospects in four of last nine fights, and is 8-1-1 overall since dropping a decision to Adrian Granados in 2012. One of those wins was an upset knockout of one-time highly ranked welterweight and world title challenger Mike "Machine Gun" Jones on Aug. 23, 2014.

"Taras is a great fighter and I know I'm the underdog, but I've surprised some fighters before and I'm confident and ready to give it my best and win again," said Herrera. "I'm coming into this fight with the same mentality I had in those fights against the other unbeaten guys. The way I see it, Taras has everything to lose and I fight as I have nothing to lose."

"I've been training very seriously and I'm excited to be able to showcase my skills on television. I grew up watching ShoBox. There will be more eyes on me and they will see my ability to fight. Getting a win will increase my ranking and open up more doors for my career."

Constantin Bejenaru vs. Stivens Bujaj – 10-Round Cruiserweight Bout

Bejenaru (pronounced "bay-zhin-nah-R00") was an accomplished amateur. The southpaw boxed on the Romanian national team for 10 years and was a nine-time national champion.

In his ShoBox premiere last April 15, the active and athletic

native of Ungheni, Moldova, scored a unanimous eight-round decision over previously unbeaten Alexey Zubov (10-0), a former Russian amateur champion and seven-time European amateur champion.

Bejenaru is anxious to return to ShoBox and continue his winning ways. "Bujaj is a great boxer, we are both undefeated but there can only be one victor, and I do not plan on losing this fight," he said. "I entered this fight with the intention of winning. That is what I train to do, that is what I am going to do.

"As a man who has been boxing for over 22 years, I feel extremely grateful to have been given this opportunity. In my previous ShoBox fight, I was labeled as the underdog. Those who doubted me quickly changed their opinions once they saw me fight, and even more so once the referee raised my hand in victory."

Bujaj (pronounced "Boo-ha") was born in Kelmend, Albania, but relocated to the Bronx, New York at an early age. The unbeaten prospect was a two-time New York Golden Gloves Champion at heavyweight who's made for good fights every time out and mostly made it look easy. This is Bujaj's third scheduled 10-round start, while Bejenaru will be making his 10-round debut.

The 26-year-old has won his last four in a row, including his last two by knockout, since boxing a split 10-round draw in a slugfest with then-undefeated three-time Chicago Golden Gloves champion Junior Wright (10-0) in May 2014.

"I'm getting prepared," said Bujah who's coming off a first-round TKO over previously undefeated beaten Sergio Ramirez (11-0) on June 11. "I'm training like this is a world title fight, and I'm totally ready to win. I know my opponent is undefeated and I can't overlook him. The way I feel, I'm on my 'A' Game. I was training in Las Vegas and now I am back in New York with Sharif Younan and I am ready to do everything I can

to win this fight.

“This is the exposure and opportunity I’ve been waiting for. I just want to pick up these WBC titles that we are fighting for and be bumped up the rankings. Once I pick up these belts, I will be in the top 10 and anything is possible.”

#### Vitor Jones Freitas vs. Manuel Mendez – Eight-Round Lightweight Bout

The nephew of popular former two-time lightweight world champion Acelino “Popo” Freitas has been victorious in 12 consecutive bouts since fighting a No-Contest in his pro debut in July 2012. He’s coming off a fifth-round TKO over Rodolfo Franz last May 21.

Two outings ago, Freitas captured the Brazilian lightweight crown with a 10-round decision over Sidney Siquiera. This will be Freitas’ sixth U.S. start; his last five fights were in Brazil.

“My uncle had many great fights on SHOWTIME and on Nov. 4, I am looking to carry on his legacy,” Freitas said. “This will be another step in following in his footsteps to become a world champion.”

Mendez, who is trained by the respected Joel Diaz, is coming off a fourth-round knockout over Erick Martinez this past Sept. 23 in Ontario. Mendez used a strong, bruising style in which he mixed his punches well to punish Martinez. The 5-foot-8, 26-year-old Mendez has gone 12-0-2 since getting stopped in his pro debut in October 2010.

“I am excited about this opportunity to fight on ShoBox,” said Mendez who is a sparring partner for Ruslan Provodnikov and Timothy Bradley. “I know with a win, my career will escalate to a new level. I am looking to knock out Vitor.”

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 Rich Gaughan producing and Rick Phillips directing.

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## **Vitor Jones Freitas stops Lucio in 1**

Philadelphia, PA (August 2, 2016)–Vitor Jones Freitas record remained perfect by stopping Licelio Da Silva Lucio in the first round of their scheduled eight-round lightweight bout this past Saturday in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

With the victory, Freitas of Salvador, Brazil improved his unblemished mark to 14-0, while notching his eighth knockout.

The 23 year-old Freitas registered two knockdowns, both with left hooks in the bout, which lasted just 79 seconds.

Freitas, who is the nephew of former four-time world champion Acelino "Popo" Freitas, will now look to come back to the United States in a higher profile bout.

"Vitor is coming along very nicely in Brazil. We showcased him on four of our cards here in the states to get his feet wet and now he has won four straight back in Brazil," said Banner Promotions President, Arthur Pelullo. "Now we are looking to bring him back here in the fall and put him on television and fight for a regional title. He is becoming the fighter we thought he could be when we signed him, and we are looking forward for the American public to embrace him in the same way they did his uncle."