

Diaz Faces Holt on Showtime Boxing

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Typifying the quality match-ups that viewers of "ShoBox: The New Generation" have come to expect during the past three-and-one-half years, four talented prizefighters with a combined 77-3-1 record will square off on SHOWTIME boxing Feb. 4 from Foxwoods Resort Casino in Mashantucket, Conn.

In the main event, World Boxing Organization (WBO) No. 2/World Boxing Association (WBA) No. 14 140-pound contender David Diaz risks takes on Kendall Holt in a 10-round junior welterweight bout. The 10-round co-feature will pit once-beaten 140-pounders Oscar "El Matador" Diaz and Al "Speedy" Gonzales.

SHOWTIME will televise the Duva Boxing doubleheader at 11 p.m. ET/PT (delayed on West Coast). The telecast represents the 56th in the popular "ShoBox" series, which debuted on SHOWTIME in July 2001. Tickets can be purchased by calling the Foxwoods Box-Office at (800) 200-2882 or online at www.foxwoods.com.

David Diaz (26-0, 14 KOs), of Chicago, is a highly regarded 28-year-old action fighter who completed his eighth consecutive undefeated campaign by going 4-0 in 2004. A member of the 1996 United States Olympic team, Diaz scored one of his most impressive victories when he dominated former WBO 140-pound champion Ener Julio en route to a spectacular 10th-round TKO on May 15, 2004, in Chicago. After winning the 1996 Golden Gloves National Championship, Diaz earned a berth on the U.S. squad after defeating Zab Judah in the U.S. Box-Offs.

"If Ricky Hatton fights (International Boxing Federation Champion) Kostya Tszyu, I will become the mandatory challenger for (WBO titleholder) Miguel Cotto, so all fights are big for me right now," said Diaz, who is coming off a ninth-round TKO over Jaime Rangel on Dec. 10, 2004.

Between fights late last year, the southpaw traveled to Australia and served as a sparring partner for Tszyu prior to his world title rematch against Sharmba Mitchell.

"I worked with Tszyu in Australia for more than a month," Diaz said. "He obviously is the best at 140 pounds, and I learned a lot working with him. He was very complimentary about my skills. That meant a lot."

Hoping to derail Diaz is the up-and-coming Holt (17-1, 11 KOs), of Paterson, N.J. The 23-year-old won 15 consecutive fights at the outset of his career before suffering his lone setback against Thomas Davis on June 18, 2004, in Chicago. Holt staggered Davis twice and seemingly had him ready to fall before getting caught in the opening round. In his last outing, Holt recorded a six-round unanimous decision over Carlos Escobar on Dec. 9, 2004, in Newark, N.J. Before turning pro at age 19 on March 30, 2001, Holt won the New Jersey Golden Gloves three times (1998-2000) and was the Ohio State and Diamond Belt champion in 1997 and 2000, respectively.

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Holt's manager, the legendary Hall of Famer Lou Duva, has high hopes for his fighter.

"I see Holt as the second coming of Meldrick Taylor," Duva said. "He throws a lot of punches and combinations just like Meldrick did. This is a big step up for him, but he is ready."

Oscar Diaz (18-1, 11 KOs), of San Antonio, will appear before a paying audience for the first time in nearly seven months. The Duva-managed, well-schooled youngster is an aggressive-minded, boxer-puncher who prefers to apply constant pressure. The 22-year-old won his initial 17 fights after turning pro at age 18 on March 16, 2001. Diaz suffered his only loss on March 26, 2004, when the more experienced Ebo Elder outpointed him across 10 action-packed rounds.

"I just did not do enough," Diaz said. "I did not use my jab. I had Elder hurt in the second round, but I let him off the hook. I have to learn from my mistakes and do better next time out."

Diaz, who is trained by Tommy Brooks, learned his lessons well. In his next fight, he flattened Juan Carlos Amezcua in the second round on July 10, 2004, in Stateline, Nev.

Gonzales (16-1-1, 7 KOs), of Chicago, turned pro on Aug. 12, 2001, after just 10 amateur fights. Despite a lack of amateur experience, he quickly became one of the Windy City's hottest pro prospects. The 24-year-old warrior won his initial 13 outings and went 14-0-1 before being dealt his lone loss on a controversial seventh-round technical decision to Demetrius Hopkins on June 18, 2004, in Chicago. The fight was stopped due to a cut caused by a headbutt earlier in the seventh round. Gonzales has rebounded to defeat his past two opponents, including a 10-round nod over Roberto Ortega in his most recent effort on Dec. 10, 2004, in Chicago.

Nick Charles will call the action from ringside, with Steve Farhood serving as expert analyst. The executive producer of the telecast is Gordon Hall, with Richard Gaughan producing.

The "ShoBox" presentation is the first of two excellent back-to-back telecasts on SHOWTIME. On Feb. 5 at 9 p.m. ET/PT (delayed on West Coast), WBA/WBC/International Boxing Federation (IBF) Welterweight Champion Cory "The Next Generation" Spinks (34-2, 11 KOs) will defend his titles in a grudge rematch against former IBF and World Boxing Organization (WBO) junior welterweight champion Zab "Super" Judah (32-2-23 KOs).

For information on "ShoBox: The New Generation" and SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING telecasts, including complete fighter bios, records, related stories and more, please go the SHOWTIME website at <http://www.sho.com/boxing>.