

## Marco Antonio Barrera defends Super Featherweight title April 9th

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### Marco Antonio Barrera To Headline April 9 Show Against Top Contender Mzonke Fana On Stellar HBO Pay-Per-View Card Featuring Mexico's Finest Prizefighters

The names are legendary – Julio Cesar Chavez, Salvador Sanchez, Ruben Olivares, and Carlos Zarate – and they all share one thing in common: they hail from perhaps the greatest fistic hotbed in the world – Mexico.

The latest boxing superstar to represent the green, white, and red flag is Marco Antonio Barrera, who at 31 has confounded boxing experts by getting even better with each fight, and on Saturday, April 9, "The Baby Faced Assassin" will defend his WBC super featherweight championship for the first time against number one contender Mzonke Fana in a 12 round contest to be televised live on HBO Pay-Per-View from the Don Haskins Center in El Paso, Texas.

Barrera-Fana will highlight a card that celebrates the best of Mexican boxing, with Ivan Hernandez and Fernando Montiel battling it out in a civil war for the WBO super flyweight championship, and 2004 Olympians Abner Mares and Vicente Escobedo taking on their toughest professional foes yet in separate bouts.

**Marco Antonio Barrera** (59-4, 41 KOs) is one of the few fighters in boxing today who needs no introduction. Now entering his 16th year as a professional, the native of Mexico City has compiled a body of work that will carry him into Canastota when he retires, but if 2004 was any indication, "The Baby Faced Assassin" won't be slowing down anytime soon. After a career that saw him win titles in two weight classes while beating a Who's Who of top fighters such as Erik Morales, Johnny Tapia, Kennedy McKinney, Naseem Hamed, and Kevin Kelley, many wrote Barrera off after a loss to Manny Pacquiao in 2003. But with complete focus and no outside of the ring distractions, Barrera scored epic victories over Paulie Ayala and old rival Erik Morales in 2004, winning the WBC super featherweight crown in the process and putting Marco firmly back where he belongs in the pound for pound rankings.

Barrera's challenger, **Mzonke Fana** (22-2, 8 KOs), may be an unfamiliar name to US boxing fans, but in his home country of South Africa, the young man known as "The Rose of Khaleylitsha" is no stranger to fight fans, having earned the boxer of the year award in South Africa, as well as the prestigious State President's Award for Sporting Excellence. In the ring, Fana has been unbeaten for over five years, a span covering 12 fights - including eight bouts which lasted ten rounds or more, a testament to Fana's tireless spirit between the ropes. In his last bout, on May 28, 2004, Fana, the WBC International and South African super featherweight champion, earned his shot at Barrera's world title with a stirring 12 round decision win over previously unbeaten Randy Suico.

Defending his WBO super flyweight title in the pay-per-view co-feature, **Ivan 'Choko' Hernandez** (19-0-1, 13

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KOs) will look to add another high profile victim to his resume as he takes on Fernando Montiel. A busy fighter with power in both hands, the unbeaten native of Ensenada is fresh off his title winning effort last September, when he upset future hall of famer Mark 'Too Sharp' Johnson via a decisive eighth round knockout. But hardcore boxing fans had had their eyes on Hernandez for a while, ever since he burst on the scene in 2000 and quickly compiled no less than four titles (WBC Youth, WBA Fedecentro, Mid-South, and WBC Mundo Hispano) in just four years' time, an amazing feat for any 22-year-old fighter.

25-year-old **Fernando 'Cochulito' Montiel** (29-1-1, 23 KOs) is no stranger to titles himself, having earned world championship honors at flyweight and super flyweight. In fact, when he battles Hernandez on April 9, he will be attempting to win back the title he lost to Mark Johnson via a close decision in 2003. Since that bout, Los Mochis' Montiel has run off three consecutive victories over quality opposition, all by knockout, and with the power and Mexican pride shared by both fighters, this bout has the potential to be one of the most memorable of 2005.

The high-quality action doesn't stop with the championship bouts though, as two highly regarded members of the Class of 2004 continue on their road to the top.

A native of Guadalajara now making his home in Hawaiian Gardens, California, 19-year-old super bantamweight **Abner Mares** (1-0, 1 KO) made a splash on the pro boxing scene in January with a second round blowout of hard-hitting veteran Luis Malave. Now with his first victory firmly under his belt, Mares, a 2004 Mexican Olympian, is ready to put on another spectacular performance on April 9.

Junior lightweight **Vicente Escobedo** was a member of the 2004 US Olympic team, where he followed in the footsteps of one of his fistic heroes, Oscar De La Hoya. And like "The Golden Boy," the 23-year-old Escobedo, who makes his home in Woodland, California, has gained rave notices from boxing insiders for his ability to box as well as punch, a style that will carry him far in the pro ranks.

Mares and Escobedo will face opponents to be announced shortly in separate six round bouts.

Also featured on April 9 will be hometown hero Juan Lazcano, who begins his road back to the lightweight championship with a ten round bout against world-class veteran Justin Juuko.

**Juan Lazcano** (33-3-1, 25 KOs) has earned his reputation as one of the best 135-pounders in the world with victories over the likes of Stevie Johnston, Wilfredo Vazquez, John John Molina and Jesse James Leija. In 2004, "The Hispanic Causing Panic" just fell short of winning the world title when Jose Luis Castillo outpointed him in a hard-fought battle, but with the heart of a champion, Lazcano is back and ready to take on the best in the world once again.

Uganda's **Justin Juuko** (39-8-1, 28 KOs) is known for two things in the boxing world – being willing to fight anyone at anytime, and always coming to fight once the bell rings. This attitude has enabled Juuko to win a number of title belts over the course of his 14-year career (NABF, African, WBC Fecarbox, WBC International, Commonwealth), and he has battled the best in the world over that period – such as Floyd Mayweather Jr., Diego Corrales, and Miguel Cotto.

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Winner of three of his last four bouts, Juuko is well aware that a win over Lazcano puts him back in the title mix at 135 pounds.

7 more exciting undercard bouts will be announced shortly.

Tickets for "Viva Mexico," priced at 35.-, 50.-, 75.-, 100.-, 200.- and 300.- are available by calling (915) 747-5234 or by visiting [www.utep.edu/events](http://www.utep.edu/events) and [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com)

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