

Andre Ward Reunites with Olympic Teammates on Fox Thursday

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LOS ANGELES – Unbeaten middleweight Andre Ward, the lone gold medalist from the 2004 United States Olympic boxing team, has seamlessly made the transition from the amateur game to the pro ranks, scoring four consecutive victories without a loss since making his debut on HBO in December of 2004. But despite his current success, there will always be a soft spot in his heart for his Olympic teammates. Two of them will join him on the highly successful “Best Damn Sports Show Period” broadcast live on FSN on August 18 at the HP Pavilion at San Jose.

"This is going to be a great and exciting event, not only for boxing fans, but for me personally, because I get to fight alongside two of my Olympic teammates, Andre Dirrell and Devin Vargas," said Ward. "I'm looking forward to putting on a spectacular performance in front of my hometown crowd and then letting the fans get an up close and personal look of Andre and Devin, just like we did in Athens."

Ward (4-0, 2 KOs) will face Christopher Holt (12-4, 8 KOs) in a six round bout. Dirrell (4-0, 3 KOs), will square off against Arturo Ortega (6-2-2, 5 KOs) in a four round super middleweight bout, and Vargas (3-0, 3 KOs) will do battle in a heavyweight six-rounder.

Oakland's Ward will be fighting in the Bay Area of California for the first time as a professional. For most, it would be a lot of pressure having to fight in front of family and friends, as well as Oakland and San Jose Mayors Jerry Brown and Ron Gonzales. But the 21-year-old Ward is unaffected by such a prospect.

"Personally, I think it's great," Ward said. "This is what you dream about when you're young and just starting out. You want to fight in your hometown and put on an unforgettable performance. I don't think it's pressure at all. Fighting for your country is pressure, especially knowing how tough it was to win gold and being the last hope to do so for America. This is enjoyment: family, friends in the audience, and gaining new fans. I love my roots in California and plan on reflecting the type of person and athlete fans will be proud of."

In the co-featured bout, Great Britain's unbeaten 2000 super heavyweight Olympic gold medalist, Audley Harrison (18-0, 13 KOs), will look to make a statement in the heavyweight division. He aims to become the first man to knock out the always tough Robert Wiggins (20-4-1, 12 KOs). Rounding out the card will be 2004 Mexican Olympic welterweight Juan de Dios Navarro Ramirez of Torreon, Mexico, making his professional debut in a four round match up against Bhakari Gates (2-2).

Individual tickets to the “Best Damn Night of Olympians Period” are priced at \$200, \$125, \$75, \$45 and \$30 and can be purchased at the HP Pavilion Ticket Office, Ticketmaster Ticket Centers located in Warehouse Music stores, Tower Records and Ritmo Latino locations throughout the Bay Area. Tickets can also be purchased online at ticketmaster.com, or charge by phone at (408) 998-TIXS, (415) 421-TIXS, or (510) 625-TIXS. For information about group discounts call (408) 999-5746.

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Doors open at 4pm, and the first bout begins at 4:30pm. The live FSN broadcast begins at 5pm PT / 8pm ET.