One of the most talented 154-pounders in the world, Daniel Santos (29-2-1, 20 KOs), is scheduled to defend his WBO junior middleweight title in the 12-round main event on SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING Saturday, Sept. 3, 2005, at 9 p.m. ET/PT (delayed on the west coast). And in a must-win fight for a pair of once-beaten heavyweights who aspire to box for a world title, Owen Beck (24-1, 18 KOs) will meet Sergei Liakhovich (22-1, 14 KOs) in the 10-round co-feature. The doubleheader, promoted by Don King Productions, will take place at Gund Arena in Cleveland, Ohio.

Question: What is your reaction to the fact that Rivera cannot fight?

Santos: It is a shame because I have been training for three months for this kind of fight. He was a strong fighter and right-handed. So now we have to change the way that we are going to fight. We have a short time to study the guy we are going to fight. I have been training almost four months, and either way I feel in great shape. It is just a matter of who they are going to put in to fight on Sept. 3.

Question: Who would you like to fight if you had a choice?

Santos: Winky Wright does not have an opponent (so I would fight him). I have been the champion for five years, and I know it would be a good show, because we are good fighters and good hitters.

Question: Do you feel like you are underrated and maybe are not getting the kind of respect that a fighter of your caliber deserves?

Santos: I know that I am underrated because I have had bad luck in my career. I have been fighting once in a year, two times in a year. And it is bad for my career because people have to know what kind of fighters they have to watch. And I know that when I get my chance, I will do my best to make the kind of fights that people like.

Question: With no opponent, what changes have you made in your training strategy in the gym?

Santos: The routine in the gym has not changed yet. I will keep doing what I am doing until I know the new opponent. Once we know the opponent, I will make some changes because that is the most important part of the fight. The kind of sparring partners you have have to be almost the same style as who you are going to fight.

Question: Recently Kofi Jantuah was calling you out. Would he be someone you would be willing to take on right now, or would you prefer a little more training to avenge your only legitimate loss?

Santos: Personally, it would be a good thing because I would like revenge. But from the business side, it would not make sense so I would not have anything to do with him.

Question: Is there any type of opponent that you would not want to fight within two weeks?

Santos: The one that I have in my mind is Winky Wright because that is the guy that is hot now. I do not know if that will happen because I do not know if they want to pay for the fight, but that is who I want.

Question: What was your initial reaction when you heard that Rivera could not fight?

Santos: I hope he recovers soon. And wishing him good luck and keeping it real.

Question: There's also another 154-pound champion, Alejandro "Terra" Garcia. If the opportunity does not present itself for you to fight Winky Wright, since Don King has the four champions, would this be a good opponent for you?

Santos: Since Don has the four champions, this would be a wonderful thing, not only for me but for the division. I would like to see happen in my division what Don was able to do in the middleweight division. This would be attractive, not only to me, but to the fight fans.

Question: Owen, do you have an opening comment?

Beck: First of all I want to thank God for this opportunity. I want to thank Showtime for the things they have been doing. I am anxious and just cannot wait for it to happen. Most definitely. It is wonderful in Cleveland.The weather is great.

Question: You have a new trainer, Willy Rush. Tell us a little bit about how that is going.

Beck: Willy Rush is just a blessing, just to have another Christian in the corner. Willy is truly a man of God. We already have one victory. Oliver McCall went out there and did what he had to do. And now it is Owen Beck's turn. And everybody from this camp will have to go back out there and keep the spirit going.

Question: Sergei, you are coming off a win over Dominick Guinn, who was very highly regarded. Are you looking forward to fighting Beck?

Liakhovich: I am getting ready, going through the pain and the hard work that it takes to get ready for a fight like that. I am very excited and thank everybody involved. I want to tell Beck and everyone that I have already, in my mind, seen how this fight is going to go, and basically I will capitalize on all of the mistakes that Beck made in the past. I am excited about this particular fight because Beck is the guy that is going to make me shine.

Question: Owen, are you scared?

Beck: Of what? The only person I am scared of is God Himself.

Question: Owen, how hard was it for you to deal with your first loss and what have you learned from that fight? Do you feel like you are better for it? How did you deal with it and how do you feel now, several months after?

Beck: I guarantee you, there are going to be fireworks up in the Gund Arena. And everybody up here in the camp, they see what is going on right now and they know. I just know when I get in the fight, it is just going to be fireworks because I am correcting all my mistakes.

Question: Sergei, do you feel you are underrated in the heavyweight ranks?

Liakhovich: My only chance to show myself was against Dominick Guinn. And I proved to everybody what I'm capable of. That was no fluke. It is just a matter of time and the people will know who Sergei Liakhovich is.

Question: Sergei, who have you been sparring with?

Liakhovich: Who cares? I mean, I spar with a bunch of guys. It is not really going to come down to the sparring partners. It is just a matter of going through the process.

Question: You were Monte Barrett's last opponent. Did you watch his fight with Hasim Rahman?

Beck: Yes I did.

Question: What did you think of Monte's performance against Rahman?

Beck: It is going to be a total difference because when I fight, I bring the pain. I bring the best out in people. I want to see what you have. So I really believe that they did what they had to do, but it was nothing like Owen Beck versus Monte.

Question: Sergei, why do you think this is going to be such an easy fight?

Liakhovich: Who told you it was an easy fight?

Question: Well, you are pretty confident.

Liakhovich: Yes, I am pretty confident, but I never said it was an easy fight.

Question: Do you think this is going to be an easy fight?

Liakhovich: No. I know he is a tough guy, but I am not Monte Barrett and I am not the guy who he fought before. I am a totally different guy. I am a totally different boxer.

Question: Do you think you are going to be too much for him?

Liakhovich: Definitely.

Question: Why do you think Owen is tailor-made for you?

Liakhovich: I love fighters that come forward and want to hit me and want to brawl with me. I love that kind of stuff.

Question: And you see that Owen will do that with you?

Liakhovich: Well, maybe now he has different plans.

Beck: I bring the pain, baby, I bring the pain.

Question: But your hope is that he will stand right in front of you like he has done with other opponents and duke it out in the ring?

Liakhovich: I don't know if he will change his style, but he has a very beautiful chin. Bring it on. Bring your chin out there and I will hit it.

Beck: I'm bringing the pain, baby. Do not worry.

Question: Did you picture that you would be fighting someone like Sergei, coming off the tough loss to Monte?

Beck: No.

Question: Are you happy for this opportunity, Owen?

Beck: I am always happy for the opportunity. It is just a blessing to me daily to see who makes it on the list.

Question: Owen, is there pressure on you? Do you look at this like you have to win this fight?

Beck: Oh, no. There is more pressure on him.

Question: Why do you say that?

Beck: Because I am just bringing it to him. I am bringing the pain.

Question: So, do you think you are going to knock him out?

Beck: When you step in the ring with me, you had better be mentally and physically prepared. I do not believe in just going to the scorecards. I believe in knocking them out to win the fight.

Question: Sergei, being that Owen was impressive in his lone defeat against Monte

Barrett, do you think a win over him would finally put you on the map?

Liakhovich: Not really. I am just looking at this fight as being a tune-up for me. But I definitely hope to go on to bigger and better places.

Question: Do you have any closing comments? Anything you would like to say?

Liakhovich: It is all good with me. I will see you Sept. 3. Tune in and watch.

Question: Owen, how do you feel when Sergei says to you this is just a tune up fight for him? How do you respond to that?

Beck: Good luck. Nice try. Try it again somewhere else. I am a born champion. I was born to do this. I made one mistake, and trust me, I never make mistakes twice. All I have to say is just come out and do what you have to do. Make a fool out of me. Make me feel like I do not deserve to be in here, if you can do it. I do not see anybody who can.