The past year has been a difficult one for light heavyweight contender Yusaf Mack of West Philadelphia. Besides incurring his second career loss in October, by seventh round TKO to Librado Andrade, his brother Steven was shot and killed and his father, Terry Smith, passed away last month at the age of 56.

Mack, whose other loss on his 24-2-2 (15 KOS) ledger was by sixth round TKO to Alejandro Berrio in May 2006, is determined to get back on track.

He will headline the June 4 installment of ESPN 2's Wednesday Night Fights when he takes on Daniel Judah, 22-2-3 (10 KOS), at the Aviator Sports Complex in Judah's hometown of Brooklyn, New York. Judah is the older brother of former world champion Zab Judah. At stake is the vacant NABA title.

The televised co-feature will pit red-hot junior middleweight James Moore, 15-0 (10 KOS), a native of County Wicklow, Ireland, who fights out of Queens, against Philadelphia's Gabriel Rosada, 9-2 (6 KOS).

The show is being promoted by Winky Wright Promotions, in association with Sal Musemeci's Final Forum and Thomas Gallagher Productions. Wright will be in attendance for the event.

The enormously popular Moore's boisterous fans will pack the house for what is expected to be a barnburner for as long as it lasts. Mack realizes that most of the fans in attendance will be there for Moore, but is still happy to have such lively supporters to look good in front of.

"I just want to show the fans that my two losses were a fluke," he said. "I guarantee I will give them something to cheer about. And the ESPN viewers won't be disappointed either."

The 28-year-old Mack says all of the adversity of the past year has only made him more mentally focused and committed to boxing than ever. He had dropped Andrade in the first round, but ran out of gas prior to the stoppage. His brother's death was senseless, and his father's passing from cirrhosis of the liver and diabetes was possibly avoidable through lifestyle changes.

"My brother was my idol, he got me started in boxing," said Mack, a former football and baseball star who had a 40-7 amateur record. "And my father and I were close. He was a good man and we talked all the time about everything. I miss him a lot."

While all of the heartbreak has been daunting for Mack, he is determined to fight through the pain. "I'm older and stronger," he said. "Judah moves a lot, but my hands will do the talking. I haven't felt this (physically) good in a long time."

Mack credits his resurgence to manager Rory Donadio and conditioner John Tandy. Tandy

operates out of England, but has been flown in to work personally with Mack at the COMBATT gym in Newark, New Jersey.

"I have the talent to be a champion, but had some bumps in the road," said Mack. "I used to have stamina problems, but John has gotten me in the greatest shape ever. I don't think that's going to be a problem in the future."

Besides strict physical training regimens that he alters regularly, Tandy has made dramatic changes to Tandy's diet and also supplements his food intake with an array of vitamins.

Mack says that fighting a Judah in Brooklyn "feeds my fire" because beating him on his home turf will enhance his reputation. As the father of six children who range in age from 10 to 1, his reputation is what will put food on the table in the future. He is also employed as a construction worker with Labor Union 332 in his hometown.

Mack realizes that this is his time to shine and he can't afford any more detours, such as the 13 months he took off after the Berrio loss when he ballooned up to nearly 200 pounds.

"During that time my dad kept telling me that all great fighters lose at one time or another," said Mack. "He helped me through a tough time."

As tough as Mack is, he hopes to break the myth that many talented Philadelphia fighters leave their best in the gym wars that the city is noted for. "Too many of them get worn out too quick and early," he explained. "I don't want that to happen to me."

Neither does Tandy, who says that Mack's change in training habits will help ensure more ring longevity. "Yusaf is in incredible shape," said Tandy. "He's not going to lose, he will win. He's a winner."

Musemeci said lesser fighters might have crawled under a rock after enduring the humbling losses that Mack has experienced.

"But," he added, "Yusaf is a real fighter with a lot of heart. He didn't give up on himself, and refuses to see himself as a steppingstone for anybody. Both he and Judah have a lot to prove. It's going to be a great fight."

The Aviator Sports Complex is located at Floyd Bennett Field on Flatbush Avenue, just south of the Belt Parkway, Exit 11S, Brooklyn, NY 11234. Doors will open at 6:30 P.M.

For tickets call Gleason's Gym at 718-797-2872. For tickets and sponsorship opportunities contact Tommy Gallagher at 917-774-3517.