NEW YORK (Feb. 8, 2011) – **Joseph King Kong Agbeko** will defend his International Boxing Federation (IBF) bantamweight world championship against undefeated rising star
Abner Mares
, who defends his WBC Silver bantamweight championship in the eagerly awaited finals of
The Bantamweight Tournament:
Winner Takes All
on
Saturday, April 23
LIVE on
SHOWTIME®
(10:30 p.m. ET/PT, delayed on the West Coast) from
Nokia Theatre
L.A. LIVE
in
Los Angeles
.

In what will be a hotly contested co-feature, former two-division world champion **Vic "Raging Bull" Darchinyan**
and former IBF bantamweight world champion
Yonnhy "El Colombiano" Perez
will clash in the tournament consolation bout.

Tickets, priced at $200, $100, $75, $50 and $25, go on sale Tuesday, Feb. 8, at 10 a.m. PT and will be available online at Ticketmaster.com, and via Ticketmaster charge-by-phone lines at (800) 745-3000. Tickets will also be available at STAPLES Center Box Office.

Agbeko (28-2, 22 KOs), of Accra, Ghana, earned a berth in the finals by dealing Perez his first career loss via a unanimous 12-round decision in the tournament semifinals last Dec. 11 in Tacoma, Wash., on SHOWTIME. Agbeko avenged a points loss to Perez which took place in a Halloween night slugfest in 2009 on SHOWTIME by impressively taking the rematch by the scores of 117-111, 116-112 and 115-113.

The thrilling encounter was punctuated by one of the year's most memorable and exciting rounds – the sixth – a give-and-take slugfest that saw each fighter neglect defense and go for broke. In the end, it was Agbeko, who despite fighting for the first time in 13 months, controlled the fight with his excellent defense and effective strategy.

Earlier in the night, Mares (21-0-1, 13 KOs), of Hawaiian Gardens, Calif. by way of Guadalajara,

Jalisco, Mexico, came from behind in dramatic fashion to reach the tournament finals by winning a 12-round split decision over former two-division world champ Darchinyan in a bloody, knockdown laden affair.

The charismatic and crowd-pleasing Mares recovered from a deep cut along his hairline in the opening round, the first knockdown of his career in the second and a points-deduction for low blows in the fourth with a rally that saw him deck Darchinyan in the seventh en route to registering the most-noteworthy triumph of his career by the scores of 115-111, 113-112 and 111-115.

The 5-foot 5 ½-inch, 30-year-old Agbeko will have the advantage in world championship fight experience as he has appeared in five world title fights while the 5-foot 5-inch, 25-year-old Mares has fought in just one - a disputed 12-round majority draw against Perez on May 22, 2010.

Both Darchinyan (35-3-1, 27 KOs), of Sydney, Australia, by way of Vanadzok, Armenia, and Perez (20-1-1, 14 KOs), of Santa Fe Springs, Calif., by way of Cartagena, Colombia, will be looking to bounce back from bitter setbacks in the semifinals. The winner of their bout remains in contention for a possible title shot against the winner of the Agbeko-Mares fight.

The hard-hitting, 5-foot 5½-inch Darchinyan displayed improved boxing skills against Mares, but after manufacturing a seemingly comfortable lead, faded in the late rounds. A former 115-pound kingpin, Darchinyan has participated in 15 world title fights.

As was evident against Mares, the 35-year-old Darchinyan would be better served to stick to his improved boxing game plan rather than his old style of brawling against the determined, durable, well-conditioned, younger and taller 32-year-old Perez, a natural bantamweight who, at 5-foot 7-inches, is very tall for the division.

The Bantamweight Tournament Final: *Winner Takes All* is promoted by **Don King Productions, Gary Shaw Productions,**
Golden Boy Promotions
and
Thompson Boxing Promotions
. An exciting undercard will be announced shortly.

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brownsugar says:

Battle of the Mohawks,..Wow,.. Agbeko is the most improved boxer in the tournament.. it was shocking to see how he finessed his way through his bout with Perez. Mares might have too big of a pair to box effectively. His balls to the wall approach is his biggest asset and his biggest liability.. Agbeko by smooth 12round unnanimous decison.