

Diego Corrales vs Jose Luis Castillo on Showtime Boxing

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In a matchup the fans, media – and fighters themselves -- have been demanding for many months, the two lightweight boxers recognized as the most talented in the world will square off when World Boxing Organization (WBO) Champion Diego “Chico” Corrales takes on two-time World Boxing Council (WBC) Champion Jose Luis Castillo in a world title unification bout on SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING Saturday, March 5, 2005, at 10:30 p.m. ET/PT (delayed on the West Coast).

The highly anticipated Battle For Supremacy at 135 pounds on SHOWTIME – an early candidate for Fight of the Year -- will be co-promoted by Gary Shaw Productions, LLC, and Top Rank, Inc., in association with Banner Promotions. A site and co-featured bout will be announced in the near future.

Corrales (39-2, 32 KOs), of Sacramento, Calif., captured the WBO crown with a sensational 10th-round TKO over defending champion Acelino “Popo” Freitas on Aug. 7, 2004, on SHOWTIME. In a terrific bout that lived up to its billing as a leading candidate for Fight of the Year, Corrales spotted the previously undefeated Freitas a huge early lead before rallying dramatically to register three knockdowns en route to winning his third world title belt.

The crowd-pleasing Corrales, who entered the ring against Freitas as WBO 130-pound titleholder, scored one knockdown in the eighth, ninth and 10th rounds. After trailing by a substantial margin after seven rounds, Corrales turned an intense bout which featured many exciting exchanges around in the eighth with his first knockdown. Entering the 10th, the aggressive, offensive-minded Corrales had edged in front on two of the three scorecards, 85-83 and 85-84, but was behind, 83-85, on the other.

Perhaps the most feared pure puncher in the lighter weight classes, the lanky Corrales was making his first start since winning the then-vacant WBO 130-pound belt with an excellent 12-round split decision over Joel Casamayor on March 6, 2004, on SHOWTIME. The victory over Casamayor came in a rematch of a fight that the Cuban had won on a disputed sixth-round TKO on Oct. 4, 2003. Corrales won his first world title fight with a seventh-round TKO over defending International Boxing Federation (IBF) 130-pound champion Robert Garcia on Oct. 23, 1999, on SHOWTIME.

Castillo (51-6-1, 45 KOs), of Sonora, Mexico, will be making the second defense in his second stint as WBC lightweight champion. In his last start, Castillo came from behind to retain his belt with a hard-fought 12-round split decision over Casamayor on Dec. 4, 2004, on SHOWTIME. In a classic puncher versus boxer matchup that had the fans on their feet cheering wildly during the final nine minutes, the late surging Castillo took the last three rounds on all three judges' scorecards to triumph by the scores of 117-111, 116-112 and 113-115.

Castillo, who won the WBC 135-pound belt the first time with a 12-round majority decision over Steve Johnston on June 17, 2000, regained it with a unanimous 12-round unanimous decision

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over Juan Lazcano on June 5, 2004.

Following three successful defenses in his initial tenure as world champion, Castillo lost the title and a subsequent rematch to unbeaten Floyd Mayweather in April and December of 2002. Many felt he got jobbed and that Mayweather was fortunate to get the nod in their first match.

After turning pro at age 16 in May 1990, Castillo knocked out his initial 14 opponents and won three titles before earning the WBC world crown. The 15 year veteran won the Mexican state featherweight (Oct. 2, 1992), Pacific 130-pound (Aug. 15, 1996) and Mexican featherweight (July 4, 1997) championships during the early part of his career.

SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING's Steve Albert and Al Bernstein will call the action from ringside with Jim Gray serving as roving reporter. The executive producer of the SHOWTIME telecast will be Jay Larkin, with David Dinkins Jr. producing and Bob Dunphy directing.

For information on SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING and "ShoBox: The New Generation" telecasts, including complete fighter bios and records, related stories and more, please go the SHOWTIME website at <http://www.sho.com/boxing> .