

NBC Fight Night Unfolds This Friday, in PA

Written by The Sweet Science
Monday, 17 September 2012 14:49

BETHLEHEM, PA - Main Events brings NBC Sports Network's "Fight Night" series back to Bethlehem, PA for the 5th edition of the popular nationally televised boxing program. TV broadcast begins at 9PM ET. Once again, the fights will be held at the beautiful new Sands Bethlehem Events Center. The place is the perfect setting for a fight. Last time, June 1st, the Center was packed with real boxing fans. September 21st should be no different. The trio of televised bouts that top the show all look like winners, but the four additional supporting fights, loaded with local talent, are nothing to sneeze at either.

In the main event, junior middleweight contenders Gabriel Rosado, Philadelphia, 20-5, 12 KOs, and Miami-based Charles Whittaker, 38-12-2, 23 KOs, lock horns in a 12-round, IBF title elimination bout. The winner of the fight, becomes the mandatory challenger for IBF world champion Cornelius "K9" Bundrage. Both fighters are raring to earn their shot, so it figures they will wage war in Bethlehem.

In the 12-round championship co-feature, Bethlehem's Ronald Cruz, 17-0, 12 KOs, defends his WBC Continental Americas Welterweight Title against Antwone Smith, 21-4-1, 12 KOs, of Miami. Cruz is the undefeated climber, but Smith is easily the best fighter he's ever faced. The experience Smith brings will clearly put Cruz' undefeated streak to the test before his hometown crowd.

The third featured bout is a 10-round light heavyweight contest that pits unbeaten Russian, Sergey Kovalev, 18-0-1, 16 KOs, against Buffalo, NY's Lionell Thompson, 12-1, 8 KOs. Thompson was a lauded amateur who looks to get back to his winning ways after losing a narrow and somewhat controversial decision in his last start. Kovalev has kayoed all but three of his foes, and will look to add Thompson to his body count.

A pair of 6-rounders and a pair of 4-rounders fill out the rest of the night's action. In a heavyweight match scheduled for six, Allentown, PA's William Miranda, 5-5-1, faces Philadelphian Pedro Martinez, 6-6, 3 KOs, in what will likely be a rough and tumble battle of big men in need of a win. Both boxers are noted rumblers with a penchant for pleasing crowds. They figure to go right at each other on Friday.

Lightweight Jason Sosa, Camden, NJ, 4-1-3, 1 KO, meets Esteban Rodriguez, Lebanon, PA, 6-2-1, 1 KO in the other 6-rounder. Neither guy is a big puncher, but both are volume brawlers that bring the excitement. Sosa is coming off a pair of thrilling out-of-town draws, that he felt should have gone his way, while Rodriguez continues to build his record. Both are coming to Bethlehem to win.

Alex Sanchez of Camden, NJ, 0-1, will seek his first professional win against Dominique Foster of Hilliard, OH, 1-1-1. Both fighters are in the early stages of their respective careers and will try to make their bones in this Bethlehem four round junior middleweight bout.

Finally, Allentown, PA junior welterweight, Jerome Rodriguez, 0-0-1, squares off with Philly journeyman Kywayne Hill, 1-9, 1 KO, over four rounds. Rodriguez came up even in his pro debut, June 1 in Bethlehem, so he is returning to the Sands to capture that important first win. Hill is a true test for every newcomer he faces and will try to spoil things for Rodriguez on

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September 21.

ABOUT SEPTEMBER 21

The Smith-Cruz, Kovalev-Thompson and Whittaker-Rosado fights top a seven-bout card at the **Sands Casino Resort Bethlehem**

. First fight is 7.15 pm (ET). Tickets priced at \$80 and \$55 can be purchased through the offices of Peltz Boxing

[\(215-765-0922\)](tel:215-765-0922)

), all Ticketmaster outlets

[\(800-745-3000\)](tel:800-745-3000)

) or at the box office at the Sands Event Center

[\(610-297-7414\)](tel:610-297-7414)

). Tickets also can be purchased online at

www.peltzboxing.com

,
www.SandsEventCenter.com

and

www.Ticketmaster.com

. Luxury suite tickets at \$130 apiece also are available. In Bethlehem, tickets are available at Deja Brew, Inc., 101 West 4

th

Street

[\(610-865-2739\)](tel:610-865-2739)

) and at Pronto Insurance Notary, 232 East 3

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Street

[\(610-419-6790\)](tel:610-419-6790)

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NBC Sports Network will televise the Cruz-Smith, Kovalev-Thompson and Rosado-Whittaker fights, beginning at 9 pm (ET).

The card is being promoted by Main Events and Peltz Boxing Promotions, Inc., in association with the Sands Casino Resort Bethlehem.