JAYSON VELEZ INJURES ANKLE PRIOR TO SHOWDOWN

AGAINST DANIEL PONCE DE LEON; RICHAR ABRIL VS. SHARIF BOGERE ELEVATED TO MAIN EVENT ON SATURDAY, MARCH 2 AND WILL NOW TAKE PLACE AT HAR D ROCK HOTEL & CASINO IN LAS VEGAS AND TELEVISED LIVE ON SHOWTIME ®

LAS VEGAS (February 15) - The vacant WBA Lightweight World Championship between **Rich ar Abril**
and
Sharif "The Lion" Bogere
has been elevated to the main event on Saturday, March 2 and will now be held at The Joint at Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas live on SHOWTIME at 10:00 p.m. ET/PT (delayed on the West Coast). The previously scheduled main event between WBC Featherweight World Champion
Daniel Ponce De Leon
and
Jayson Velez
has been removed from the fight card due to a right ankle fractured suffered this week by Velez. The venue change from Harlem's Apollo Theater in New York City comes as a result of the loss of the De Leon vs. Velez fight, and the presence of the Mexico vs. Puerto Rico rivalry attached to it, making it less prudent to promote the event in Harlem in close proximity to large Mexican and Puerto Rican communities.

Opening the telecast will be unbeaten featherweight phenom **Gary Russell Jr.** against Russia's **Vyacheslav Gusev** in a 10-round featherweight bout.

The evening of fights is presented by Golden Boy Promotions and sponsored by Corona. The SHOWTIME telecast begins at 10:00 p.m. ET/PT (delayed on the West Coast) with preliminary fights to air live on SHOWTIME EXTREME at 8:00 p.m. ET/PT (delayed on the West Coast).

Tickets priced at $150, $100, $75, $50 and $25, plus applicable taxes, fees and services charges, along with a limited number of VIP suite seats priced at $125, will be on sale shortly at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Box Office, all Ticketmaster locations, online at www.ticketmaster.com or by phone at (800) 745-3000. An exact on sale date will be announced as soon as determined.

Tickets purchased for Daniel Ponce De Leon vs. Jayson Velez at the Apollo Theater will be refunded at their point of purchase.

Thirty-year-old Richar Abril (17-3-1, 8 KO's) was fairly unknown outside of hardcore fight circles heading into 2012, but when the Cuba-born resident of Miami, Florida took on highly-touted **Brandon Rios** for the WBA Lightweight World Championship in April of last year, that status changed over the span of 12 rounds. Though WBA Interim Lightweight World Champion Abril lost a split decision to Rios that night, the boxing media and fans around the world voiced their displeasure, calling it one of the worst decisions ever. On March 2, Abril rightfully gets another shot at the title, this time against Bogere.

Uganda native Sharif "The Lion" Bogere (23-0, 15 KO's) was a five-time African champion in his amateur days and now he's eager to add some professional gold to his trophy case on March 2. An aggressive contender with impressive power, the 24-year old (who now makes his home in Las Vegas) has impressed in his wins over top rising stars **Ray Beltran, Francisco Contreras, Sergio Rivera** and **Manuel Leyva**, putting him in prime position for a shot at the world title.

Perhaps the most talented young fighter in the sport today, 24-year-old southpaw Gary Russell Jr. (21-0, 13 KO's) has been showing his stellar boxing skills since his days as an amateur standout. In the fourth year of his professional career in 2012, he began adding power punching into his repertoire with impressive knockouts of **Christopher Perez** and **Roberto Castaneda**. On March 2, the Capitol Heights, Maryland resident will look to continue to wow fans in the SHOWTIME opening fight against Gusev.

Prokopyevsk, Russia's Vyacheslav Gusev (20-2, 5 KO's) is a nine year professional who has started to fulfill his world championship potential in the ring. A decorated competitor with several

regional titles to his name, the 26-year-old began making his mark in 2010 as he began a four-fight winning streak that he will bring into the ring with him on March 2. In his most recent fight on April 30, he rose from the canvas to decision **Padjai Yongyuthgym** and he plans on handing Russell his first defeat at The Joint.