

## Mendez-Barthelemy Tops FNF Return Jan. 3

Written by The Sweet Science  
Friday, 13 December 2013 16:03

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### **ESPN Friday Night Fights Returns January 3 with World Title Showdown**

#### **2014 Season to Include 26 Telecasts, New Technology and Re-Branded ESPN Deportes Show**

*ESPN Friday Night Fights presented by Corona Extra* will return for its 17th season Friday, Jan. 3, at 9 p.m. ET live on ESPN2, [WatchES](#)  
[PN](#) and

broadband Spanish-language

[ESPN Deportes+](#)

with a 12-round IBF title bout between Junior Lightweight titlist Argenis Méndez (21-2-1, 11 KOs) and undefeated Rances Barthelemy (19-0, 12 KOs). The 10-round co-feature will include up and coming Middleweight contender Caleb Truax (23-1, 4 KOs). ESPN Deportes – which will re-brand its coverage as

*Noche de Combates*

(formerly

*Viernes de Combates*

) with some telecasts on Saturdays – will air the bouts on Saturday, Jan. 4, at 9 p.m.

The first of 2014's 26 telecasts, from the Target Center in Minneapolis, is co-promoted by former Heavyweight champion Mike Tyson and his promotional company Iron Mike Productions. Tyson made his promotional debut in August to close out the 2013 *Friday Night Fights* season in a night that featured Méndez in the world title main event.

“We are eagerly anticipating the upcoming season of *Friday Night Fights* and *Noche de Combates*,” said Brian Kweder, ESPN senior director of programming and acquisitions. “We start the season just as we finished last season with a world title fight co-promoted by Mike Tyson’s Iron Mike Productions. The biggest change for 2014 is that we are assigning dates to promoters with as much advance notice as possible to allow for even better fights and bigger crowds. We’ve partnered with a group of promoters who have always delivered in the past and are committed to upping the ante even further for 2014. Having a world title fight and names like Kendall Holt, Zsolt Erdei and Arash Usmanee early this season show that the strategy is already paying dividends.”

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### ESPN2 Commentators/Studio:

Blow-by-blow commentator [Joe Tessitore](#) and ringside analyst [Teddy Atlas will](#) return to describe the action for ESPN2. Both are recipients of the prestigious Sam Taub Award for Excellence in Broadcast Journalism presented by the Boxing Writers Association of America (BWAA): Atlas (2001), Tessitore (2010). Studio host

[Todd Grisham](#)

(

[@GrishamESPN](#)

), who will fill-in ringside for Tessitore during the season opener, will return for his second season providing all the latest boxing news and highlights. Bilingual reporter

**Bernardo**

**Osuna**

(

[@osunaespn](#)

), who last year became the series' first-ever on-site reporter, will contribute to

*Friday Night Fights*

in English, and

*Noche de Combates (Fight Night*

) in Spanish.

### ESPN Deportes Commentators/Studio:

**Delvin Rodríguez** will call the fights with [Pablo Viruega](#) for *Noche de Combates* on both ESPN Deportes and ESPN Deportes+, while

**Leopoldo González**

and

**Claudia Trejos**

will anchor the studio. Hall of Fame referee

**Joe Cortez**

will join

**Trejos**

and

**González**

in studio throughout the season, with

**Osuna**

providing reports and interviews each week.

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ESPN Deportes' weekly 60-minute boxing news and analysis show *Golpe a Golpe* will be co-hosted by

**Juan Manuel Márquez**

and

**Jorge Eduardo Sánchez**

.  
*A Los Golpes*

(7:30 p.m. Mondays) will provide the latest boxing news and analysis with co-hosts

**Osuna**

,  
[David Faitelson](#)

and analyst

**Julio César Chávez Sr.**

### **New Technology:**

*Friday Night Fights* telecasts will include alternate point of view cameras mounted in different locations capturing the atmosphere of the venues and fights.

*Fights*

*Friday Night*

will also

feature more live audio during fights to give viewers more access to the fighters and trainers.

### **Ultra-Mo:**

Every *Friday Night Fights* telecast will continue to implement an *ultra slo*-mo camera, providing some of the most dramatic and amazing replays of a fight's biggest punches.

### **WatchESPN and ESPN3:**

Every *Friday Night Fights* card will be available on [WatchESPN](#), ESPN's online destination that delivers live access to ESPN, ESPN2, ESPNU, ESPNEWS, ESPN Deportes, ESPN3 and ESPN Buzzer Beater/Goal Line on computers, smartphones and tablets. Replays of *Friday Night Fights*

cards will be available on ESPN3, ESPN's multiscreen network accessible online at WatchESPN.com, on smartphones and tablets via the WatchESPN app and streamed on televisions through ESPN on Xbox LIVE to Gold members, Roku and Apple TV.

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### ESPN.com:

*Making the Rounds*, ESPN.com's original boxing show with **Jim Basquil, Brian Campbell** and **Kieran Mulvaney**

, will discuss boxing's top stories each week and include analysis of *Friday Night Fights* cards.

**Dan Rafael**

(

[@danrafalespn](#)

)will continue to write features and provide analysis for ESPN.com.

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