

## Mendez Wants To Render Judges Obsolete on Jan. 3

Written by The Sweet Science  
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DEERFIELD, Fla. (December 19, 2013) - International Boxing Federation (IBF) Junior Lightweight World Champion Argenis "La Tormenta" Mendez (21-2-1, 11 KOs) has vowed not to leave the outcome of his January 3 title defense against No. 1 mandatory challenger Rances "Kid Blast" Barthelemy (19-0, 12 KOs), airing live on the 2014 ESPN *Friday Night Fights* season opener, in the hands of the judges.

Mendez, fighting out of Brooklyn (NY), will make his second world title defense against Barthelemy at Target Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The 2004 Dominican Republic Olympian learned an invaluable lesson in his first world title defense, fighting a controversial 12-round draw with Arash Usmanee last August, in which most observers felt Mendez clearly won, on the first event ever presented by his promoter, Iron Mike Productions (IMP).

"I definitely learned that, when you're in the ring," Mendez explained, "you have to give it your all. Sometimes, what you and our corner think isn't what is going through the judges' minds. Honestly, I don't know what fight the judges saw. There was no way that bout was a draw. Unfortunately that fight wasn't the first time this has happened to me. I've been robbed twice before, once in Denver (vs. Jaime Sandoval), and the other time in Mexico (vs. Juan Carlos Salgado). I knocked both guys down during our fights. Now, I'm more determined to get in there and be more aggressive to make sure there is no doubt that I am the winner. I'm definitely not going to leave it to the judges. I know for sure that I'm going home with my title."

The irony of the Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup> fight is that Mendez' head trainer for the first time is two-time world champion John David Jackson, who used to be Barthelemy's head trainer. Also, Barthelemy also was a controversial winner in an IBF eliminator for the No. 2 spot over Usmanee, in which the large majority felt Usmanee was robbed. Unbeaten Cuban-born Barthelemy then knocked out Fahsai Sakreerin (39-3-1) on June 21 in an official IBF title eliminator to earn his first world title shot versus Mendez.

"John David Jackson has been great," Mendez remarked. "He's definitely been teaching me how to be more aggressive, throwing more punches and improving my power. He's great strategizing and together we have worked out a great plan for this upcoming fight. Along with Jackson, I also have former two-time world champion (IMP stable-mate and fellow countryman) Joan Guzman in my corner. I doesn't get any better than that! I have two world champions in my corner helping me prepare for his fight. In addition, Jackson trained Barthelemy in for his previous two fights. We already have the blueprint, my job is to go out there January 3<sup>rd</sup> and execute.

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"I really think Usmanee won his fight with Barthelemy and that's why I gave him the opportunity in August to fight me for the world title. I honestly thought that he was the better fighter."

Mendez finds himself in the rare position of being the headliner on an ESPN *Friday Night Fights* show to conclude one season and then come right back to kick-off its next year of programming.

"I plan on expanding my fan-base by headlining both the finale and premier of the ESPN boxing season," Mendez concluded. "Everyone is getting a chance to see what I bring to the tale and why I am world champion. I would like to thank the entire ESPN family for giving me the chance to prove myself to the boxing world. The support ESPN has given me is incredible. I play on repaying them by having an exciting title match that will have all boxing fans on edge. Hopefully, my upcoming bout will bring bigger and better opportunities for me."

The first 2014 installment of ESPN *Friday Night Fights* on Jan. 3 is being presented by Iron Mike Productions, Seconds Out Promotions and Warriors Boxing. Tickets are priced at \$35, \$65, \$100, \$150 and \$250 and are available at Target Center's Box Office, online at AXS.com or by calling 888.9.AXS.TIX [49](tel:8889297849) [\(888.929.7849\)](tel:8889297849)). Doors open at 6 p.m. ET, first bell 7 p.m. ET, and the ESPN broadcast starts at 9 p. m. ET.

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