

NEW YORK (Sept. 6, 2012) – Veteran sportscaster **Mauro Ranallo** and International Boxing Hall of Famer **Mark “Too Sharp” Johnson**

will join this **Saturday’s SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING** telecast, live on **SHOWTIME**®

(9 p.m. ET/PT, delayed on the West Coast) from **Hard Rock Hotel & Casino** in Las Vegas.

Ranallo will host the show and call the blow by blow action alongside two International Boxing Hall of Famers — longtime SHOWTIME boxing analyst **Al Bernstein** and special guest analyst Johnson — for Saturday’s WBC Interim Super Lightweight Championship bout between the WBC’s No. 1 contender **OI**

usegun Ajose and No. 2 contender **Lucas Matthyse** and the co-featured bout featuring **J’Leon Love** vs. **Ramon Valenzuela**

Known for his enthusiastic calls and knowledge of combat sports, Ranallo joins the SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING team after spending more than five years as lead play-by-play announcer for STRIKEFORCE mixed martial arts (MMA) on SHOWTIME.

A lifelong boxing fan, Ranallo is thrilled for the opportunity to join the recent Hall of Fame inductees at ringside.

“I am very excited about joining the SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING team,” Ranallo said. “Having covered combat sports for over two decades, I look forward to calling some of the best boxing action on the planet.

Mauro Ranallo, Mark Johnson To Call Saturday Showtime with Al Bernstein

Written by The Sweet Science
Thursday, 06 September 2012 12:03

“My first main event could redefine the Big Bang theory with one of the sport’s biggest punchers, Lucas Matthisse, looking to showcase his preternatural punching power. However, it won’t be easy against a slick technician such as the undefeated Olusegun Ajose.”

The first African American to win a flyweight and super flyweight world title, Johnson is, at the age of 40, the youngest boxer in history to get inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame. He was also the first fighter born and raised in Washington, D.C., to enter the Hall.

A speedy, talented southpaw, who last fought in 2006, Johnson could box or brawl and was a fixture on pound-for-pound lists in late 1990’s and early 2000’s.

Johnson and Bernstein were both members of the Hall’s 2012 class.

“It is a great honor and privilege to join a network like SHOWTIME, which has produced some of the greatest shows and memories in boxing history,” Johnson said. “I’m as excited to be a part of the world-class SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING team as I was when they first told me I would be finally getting my first world title shot after waiting three years for it. This is a dream come true for me. I’ve been studying and I’m ready to go. I look forward to bringing a unique insight to the SHOWTIME audience.

“There are not too many places that you will be able to see and hear two Boxing Hall of Famers at once, so to be granted this opportunity and to work alongside Al Bernstein, whom I entered the Boxing Hall of Fame with this year, makes it that much sweeter.”

Johnson, a veteran of 50 fights, knows what both Ajose and Matthisse need to do if they want to walk out of the ring a world champion.

“The fight between Olusegun Ajose and Lucas Matthisse is going to be very exciting,” Johnson said. “Although Matthisse feels like he didn’t close the gaps and could have possibly won those fights against **Devon Alexander** and **Zab Judah**, he came back with a great knockout against

Humberto Soto

this past June where he was able to use his strength and outwork him.

“Ajose is a guy who has 30 wins with 14 knockouts and no losses and is a surely a power puncher. However, we will see how well he adjusts outside of his comfort zone, the U.K. (United Kingdom) when he comes to the bright lights of Nevada against the experienced Matthyse. This will be the first time both of these guys get to be front and center as the main event on a platform like SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING.”

Ajose vs. Matthyse, a 12-round fight for the vacant WBC Interim Super Lightweight World Championship taking place Saturday, September 8 at The Joint At Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Las Vegas, is presented by Golden Boy Promotions in association with DiBella Entertainment, Gary Shaw Productions and Arano Box Promotions and sponsored by Corona and AT&T. The SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING telecast will air live at 9:00 p.m. ET/PT (delayed on the West Coast) with middleweight prospects J’Leon Love and Ramon Valenzuela squaring off in a 10-round co-featured bout presented in association with Mayweather Promotions. Preliminary fights will air live on SHOWTIME EXTREME® beginning at 7:00 p.m. ET/PT (delayed on the West Coast).

Tickets, priced at \$200, \$100, \$75, \$50 and \$25, along with a limited number of VIP suite seats priced at \$150, are on sale and may be purchased at the Hard Rock Hotel Box Office, all Ticketmaster locations, online at www.Ticketmaster.com or by phone at [\(800\) 745-3000](tel:8007453000) .