ATLANTIC CITY, February 13 - After a broken thumb forced Johnathon Banks to withdraw from his February 16 rematch with Seth Mitchell, Golden Boy Promotions has announced that a pivotal 12-round WBC super middleweight title eliminator between unbeaten number one rated contender Nikola Sjekloca and number two rated contender Sakio "The Scorpion" Bika will move into the HBO World Championship Boxing co-main event at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City, New Jersey before Adrien Broner defends his world title against Gavin Rees.

Plus, the stacked non-televised undercard will feature a USBA Junior Middleweight title fight between Charles Whittaker and Demetrius Hopkins, a junior lightweight bout pitting Vicente Escobedo against Edner Cherry and appearances by 2012 United States Olympians Rau'Shee Warren and Jamel Herring.

Budva, Montenegro's Nikola Sjekloca (25-0, 7 KO's) is a skilled boxer whose long hours in the gym and the ring are finally starting to pay off as he makes his way to the ring in Atlantic City for his first fight in the United States. A professional since 2006, the 34-year-old Sjekloca has been dominant while fighting in Europe, winning the WBC International and WBC Mediterranean titles along the way. His quest won't be complete until he adds a world title to his resume and a win over Bika will put him one win away from that goal.

A punishing puncher whose aggressive style has stopped 21 foes in their tracks, 33-year-old Sakio "The Scorpion" Bika (30-5-2, 21 KO's) has been among the best in the world for years, with the only thing eluding him being a world championship belt. A 2000 Olympian for Cameroon who also won NBC's hit boxing reality show "The Contender" in 2007, Bika's list of vanquished opponents includes Sam Soliman, Jaidon Codrington and Peter Manfredo Jr. The winner of two straight and coming off of a 10th round technical knockout over Dyah Davis last June, Bika is fired up for his February 16 showdown with Sjekloca.

Back in a fighting rhythm after a layoff of over a year, Philadelphia's Demetrius "The Gladiator" Hopkins (32-2-1, 12 KO's) has looked sharp in his new weight class of 154 pounds, shutting out Doel Carrasquillo and stopping Joshua Snyder in his first two fights in the division. However, the truest test of his ability to challenge the elite at junior middleweight thus far will come on February 16 when he meets up with Miami's Charles Whittaker (39-13-2, 23 KO's). A hard-hitting late bloomer who has won 15 of his last 16 bouts, the 39-year-old Whittaker will push Hopkins hard for 12 rounds if necessary in defense of his USBA Junior Middleweight title, but the "Killa" would love to end matters sooner than that.

2004 United States Olympian Vicente Escobedo (26-4, 15 KO's) will make his first start since a July 2012 title fight loss to Adrien Broner on Saturday night and the 31-year-old Woodland, California native can't wait to score a win and get back on track for another shot at a world championship. Standing in his way will be Miami veteran Edner "Cherry Bomb" Cherry (30-6-2, 16 KO's), a former world title challenger at 140 pounds whose return to his optimum weight class of junior lightweight has seen him go unbeaten in his last seven bouts.

Three-Time United States Olympian Rau'shee Warren (2-0) has left the amateur game behind as he searches for professional gold and he's off to a good start thus far wins in both of his bouts. On February 16, the bantamweight prospect will join his fellow Cincinnati native Adrien Broner on one of the most highly-anticipated cards of the year in a four-round battle against Wharton, Texas' Richard Hernandez (0-5).

Rockville Centre, New York's Jamel Herring (1-0) proudly represented the United States at the 2012 London Olympics and after his professional debut win over Puerto Rico's Jose Valderrama on December 8, the lightweight prospect will seek his second victory the weekend against Carlos Lopez (4-2) of San Juan, Puerto Rico in a four-round.

In lightweight action, Toledo's Robert Easter Jr. (2-0, 2 KO's) will meet up with the aforementioned Valderrama (3-3, 3 KO's) from Manati, Puerto Rico in a four-round fight and opening up the show will be Philadelphia's Wahid Rahim (3-0, 1 KO) facing Allentown, Pennsylvania's Ismael Serrano who will be making his professional debut.

Broner vs. Rees, a 12-round fight for Broner's WBC Lightweight World Championship will take place Saturday, February 16 at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The event is promoted by Golden Boy Promotions, R & R Promotions, sponsored by Caesars Atlantic City and Corona and will be televised live on HBO World Championship Boxing beginning at 10:30 p.m. ET/PT. The co-main event will be a 12-round WBC super middleweight title eliminator between undefeated number one rated contender Nikola Sjekloca and number two rated contender Sakio Bika

Tickets priced at $200, $100, $50 and $25, plus applicable taxes and service charges, are available for purchase at the Boardwalk Hall box office, by calling Ticketmaster at (800) 736-1420 or

online at
www.ticketmaster.com
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