

New Foe To Fight Santana on "ShoBox"

Written by The Sweet Science
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LAS VEGAS—Undefeated lightweight Angelo “La Cobra” Santana (14-0, 11 KOs), from Miami, Fla., will now face Bahodir Mamadjonov (12-1, 8 KOs), from Uzbekistan now fighting out of Houston, on Friday at Treasure Island Resort & Casino in Las Vegas after his originally scheduled opponent, Carlos Cardenas, bowed out late last week owing to a shoulder injury.

Undefeated super lightweight prospect Amir “Young Master” Imam (8-0, 7 KOs), from Albany, N.Y., will meet Jeremy “Hollywood” Bryan (16-2, 7 KOs), from Paterson, N.J., in the co-feature. The *ShoBox: The New Generation* doubleheader will be televised live on SHOWTIME beginning at 10 p.m. ET/PT (delayed on the West Coast). It will take place in the Treasure Island Ballroom and is promoted by Don King Productions in association with Treasure Island.

Tickets to the event—all priced at \$100 each, plus tax and fees—can be purchased at the Treasure Island box office or by calling [\(866\) 712-9308](tel:8667129308) or [\(702\) 894-7723](tel:7028947723). Doors open at 3 p.m. PT, and a full undercard will be presented prior to the televised matches.

Santana vs. Cardenas was to have been a 12-round contest for the World Boxing Association interim lightweight championship. Santana vs. Mamadjonov is scheduled for 10 rounds.

Santana, a 24-year-old southpaw, was a two-time national champion in Cuba before defecting to Miami to follow his dreams of winning a boxing title. He has now earned the WBA’s No. 3 ranking in the 135-pound division. Blessed with heavy hands, he has stopped his last seven opponents in five rounds or less.

In a sensational performance, Santana served notice that he was a force to be reckoned with by registering a third-round technical knockout out over world-class contender Justin Savi on June 23, 2012, at the Seminole Hard Rock in Hollywood, Fla.

Santana was even more impressive his last fight on *ShoBox*, scoring a scintillating fifth-round knockout on Nov. 16 over previously undefeated Johnny Garcia—who gained attention in early 2012 by out-pointing Cuban prospect Yordenis Ugas. Santana dropped Garcia three times, one in the first and two in the fifth. He finished Garcia in an ESPN.com Knockout of the Year candidate with a picturesque right-left combination.

Not only will Santana have to adjust to Mamadjonov as a late replacement, he will also have to navigate his southpaw stance. The Uzbekistani native’s biggest fight came against undefeated Darley Perez—who is still undefeated and is ranked No. 3 by the International Boxing Federation. They met on Aug. 10 in California where Mamadjonov gave Perez all he could handle before losing by split-decision. Had Mamadjonov not suffered a knockdown in the eighth round, he may have won the fight.

The eight-round *ShoBox* co-feature showcases two very accomplished amateurs that are gaining notice as professionals. Imam, 22, will be facing his toughest opponent to date in the more experienced Bryan, 27.

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The fast-handed power-punching Imam, who had advanced the 2011 U.S. Olympic trials before losing, has won all but one of his professional fights by knockout. Since winning a four-round decision in his debut on Nov. 5, 2011, Imam has won seven fights in a row by knockout, all inside two rounds.

Bryan was a two-time National Golden Gloves Champion and national under-19 champion who notched amateur wins over current unified 140-pound world champion Danny Garcia and Javier Molina in the amateurs. Bryan, a pro since November 2007, is coming off the biggest win of his career, an eight-round unanimous decision over former European champion Yuri Romanov on Jan. 4 in Miami.

In the top non-televised undercard bout, Ryan "The Irish Outlaw" Coyne (21-0, 9 KOs), from St. Louis, and Marcus Oliveira (24-0-1, 19 KOs), from Lawrence, Kan., will collide in a battle of unbeatens in a WBA light heavyweight elimination bout. The two were to have met on the undercard of Bernard Hopkins vs. Tavoris Cloud on March 9 before Coyne suffered a cut during training that resulted in a postponement.

The winner of Coyne vs. Oliveira, scheduled for 12 rounds, will become the No. 1-ranked light heavyweight by the WBA and the mandatory challenger to its champion, Beibut Shumenov.

Coyne gained attention while campaigning as a cruiserweight when he was chosen to participate in the fourth season of *The Contender*. He made it to the semi-finals before suffering an accidental headbutt that forced him to leave the competition. In his final fight at cruiserweight, Coyne captured the World Boxing Council United States Championship with a unanimous decision over the previously undefeated David McNemar on June 25, 2011.

Coyne is 3-0 since moving down to the 175-pound limit in October 2011.

Oliveira has shown considerable power by winning 19 of his 25 matches by knockout, a 76% knockout ratio. He scored a pair of third-round knockouts in fights against his most notable opponents: former cruiserweight world champion Kelvin "Concrete" Davis in 2008 and Antwun Echols on Jan. 28, 2012.