



**Exciting Light Heavyweight Star Andrzej Fonfara Takes On
Hard-Hitting Joe Smith Jr. In Primetime Main Event of
Premier Boxing Champions on NBC Saturday, June 18
from UIC Pavilion in Chicago
(8:30 p.m. ET/5:30 p.m. PT)**

**Plus! Bantamweight World Champion Juan Carlos Payano Battles
Rau'shee Warren in Rematch of 2015 Thriller**

&

**Rising Star Erickson Lubin Faces Mexican Brawler Daniel Sandoval in Super
Welterweight Bout That Rounds Out Action-Packed Tripleheader**

Tickets on Sale Now!

CHICAGO (May 13, 2016) - Power-punching fan favorite **Andrzej Fonfara** (28-3, 16 KOs) will enter the ring against no nonsense New Yorker **Joe "The Irish Bomber" Smith Jr.** (21-1, 17 KOs) on Saturday, June 18 in a 10-round primetime battle that headlines **Premier Boxing Champions** (PBC) on **NBC** from UIC Pavilion in Chicago.

Televised coverage begins at **8:30 p.m. ET/5:30 p.m. PT** and will feature a bantamweight world title rematch that sees current champion **Juan Carlos Payano** (17-0, 8 KOs) take on three-time U.S. Olympian **Rau'shee "Nuke" Warren** (13-1, 4 KOs) as they rehash their rivalry that began in August 2015 when Payano won a narrow split-decision to retain his title. Also featured on the telecast is rising star **Erickson "The Hammer" Lubin** (14-0, 10 KOs) who faces powerful Mexican **Daniel Sandoval** (37-3, 34 KOs) in a super welterweight contest.

"I think that this fight Smith is a great challenge for me and I do not underestimate him," said Fonfara. "He is young and hungry and he wants to use this fight and my name to show the world his skills. He's coming to Chicago for victory and glory. I have to show him that I am stronger, more experienced and most importantly, a smarter fighter. I have to win this fight because it will open the door for me to rematch Adonis Stevenson."

"I've been working very hard and for many years towards an opportunity like this," said Smith Jr. "I am grateful to Joe DeGuardia and Star Boxing for helping to get me here. This fight is going to change my life and no one is going to keep me from winning."

Payano and Warren first fought in Florida where Payano retained his title via split decision with scores of 113-111 twice for him and 115-109 for Warren. The fight featured consistent action and some controversy. Payano was deducted a point in round three while Warren lost two points in round nine for an intentional foul. At the end of the fight, both men raised their hands believing they had won and now they look to settle the score in Chicago.

"I knew this rematch would be offered and it's been a waiting game since I beat him the first time," said Payano. "I feel like I won convincingly, but some people feel otherwise. I'm very excited about fighting him again and this time I'll beat him even more easily. Fighting on NBC is a great privilege and it's a great place to showcase my talents. I am coming in humbled by this opportunity."

"I've been waiting for this rematch since the moment we got out of the ring the first time," said Warren. "I'm happy it's finally coming up on June 18. Until that day is here, there is nothing else on my mind. I'm real sharp right now. I'm going for the knockout. It didn't go my way last time, but I'm bringing home the belt this time."

"Every fight is big for me, whether I'm televised or not, because I always give it my all," said Lubin. "But fighting in primetime on NBC is a big opportunity for me and I know it will bring something out of me. I have to perform. It's up to me to go out and showcase my talent so I can keep moving up the ladder. Daniel Sandoval is a veteran who can prepare me for a world title shot. I'm more than ready and this fight will put me one step closer."

"This is a very good fight for me and I'm excited," said Sandoval. "I know if I come to the U.S. and beat Lubin, my name will be big and there will be another great Mexican fighter on the map. I know Lubin is the top prospect in the U.S. right now and a very fast southpaw. He is all the things you wouldn't want to go up against, but it's boxing and I'm Mexican. I'll fight anybody, anytime, anywhere."

Tickets for the live event, which is promoted by Warriors Boxing and Star Boxing, are priced at \$201,

\$101, \$61 and \$41, not including applicable service charges, and are on sale now. To charge by phone with a major credit card, call Ticketmaster at (800) 745-3000 or UIC Pavilion Box Office at (312) 413-5740. Tickets are also available at www.ticketmaster.com or by visiting the UIC Pavilion Box Office (Thursday or Friday 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.).

"Warriors Boxing is excited to bring PBC on NBC to the Windy City," said Leon Margules, President of Warriors Boxing. "Chicago's favorite son, Andrzej Fonfara, always thrills fans with his non-stop fighting style. Joe Smith Jr. has been destroying his competition in New York and also brings a fan friendly 'seek-and-destroy' style to the fight. The main event should be explosive. When you add up-and-coming superstar Erickson Lubin and if Payano vs. Warren II live up to their prior Fight of the Year candidate, it will be a can't miss night of boxing."

"I am truly looking forward to this main event," said Joe DeGuardia of Star Boxing. "Smith and Fonfara are both very exciting fighters and I expect a thrilling war. Their styles will have Chicago rocking with enthusiastic Irish fans for Smith and Polish fans for Fonfara. The electric atmosphere will be a treat to everyone watching on NBC and I expect big things from Joe Smith Jr."

Fonfara returns to the ring after defeating Nathan Cleverly in October at UIC Pavilion in a fight that garnered Fight of the Year consideration and saw a record number of punches landed (936) and thrown (2524) for a light heavyweight fight in CompuBox history. Prior to that, the 28-year-old became the first person to stop Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. and lost a decision to world champion Adonis Stevenson in a fight that saw both men hit the canvas. From Warsaw, Poland but training out of Chicago, Fonfara will fight in the Windy City for the 20th time when he enters the ring in primetime on June 18.

Representing Long Island, New York, Smith Jr. will bring his heavy hands to primetime as he looks for his 16th straight victory on June 18. The 26-year-old was a highly decorated amateur who won the 2008 New York Golden Gloves with a victory over Seanie Monaghan. A member of the Local 66 Laborers Union between fights and the oldest of eight siblings, Smith Jr. picked up his most impressive victory of his career so far when he defeated veteran Will Rosinsky in a hotly contested battle in Brooklyn. He followed it up with a second round stoppage of Fabiano Pena in April and is set for his toughest challenge in June.

The two-time Dominican Olympian Payano will defend his title for the second time since winning a technical decision over Anselmo Moreno in September 2014. The accomplished amateur won gold at the 2006 Central American and Caribbean games with victories over McJoe Arroyo and Yoandris Salinas. The unbeaten 32-year-old defeated Jundy Maraon, Jose Silveria and Luis Maldonado on the way to his title shot.

A three-time U.S. Olympian from Cincinnati, Warren is determined to make the most of his second shot at a world title. The 29-year-old turned pro in 2012 and picked up victories over veterans Jose Luis Araiza, Javier Gallo, German Meraz and Jhon Alberto Molina leading up to the first world title shot. Another fighter in veteran trainer Mike Stafford's stable, Warren was the first member of the 2012 U.S. Olympic team to earn a world title shot and will look again to become the first member of that team to capture a world title.

A highly-regarded prospect with an exciting style, the 20-year-old Lubin has burst onto the scene looking to engage and finish opponents early. Fighting out of Orlando, he has already taken down experienced veterans including Orlando Lora, Ayi Bruce, Michael Finney and Norberto Gonzalez. He was sensational in November 2015 when he knocked out Alexis Camacho on NBC and in January he headlined his first card and dominated Jose De Jesus Macias in his first 10-round bout.

A winner of 18 of his last 19 fights, Sandoval enters this fight coming off of stoppage victories over Grady Brewer and Francisco Villanueva. The 25-year-old has won his previous two starts in the U.S. with decision victories over Richard Gutierrez in 2014 and Larry Smith in 2012 and will look to take down the undefeated Lubin on June 18.

For more information visit www.premierboxingchampions.com, www.nbcsports.com/boxing follow on Twitter @PremierBoxing, @Andrzej_Fonfara, @JC_Payano, @RausheeWarren, @EricksonHammerL, @WarriorsBoxProm, @StarBoxing and @NBCSports and become a fan on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/PremierBoxing, www.Facebook.com/WarriorsBoxingPromo and www.Facebook.com/NBCSports. Highlights available at www.youtube.com/premierboxingchampions. PBC on NBC is sponsored by Corona, La Cerveza Mas Fina.

CONTACTS:

Swanson Communications: (202) 783-5500

Tim Smith, Premier Boxing Champions: timothy@haymonboxing.com

Andre Courtemanche, Warriors Boxing: (954) 302-2462, bigmediabuzz@msn.com

Warriors Boxing: Leon@warriorsboxing.com

Star Boxing: (718) 823-2000; Deguardia@starboxing.com

UIC Pavilion: (312) 413-5700

Media Credentials: www.magnamedia.com