



CHINESE HEAVYWEIGHT SENSATION TAISHAN, 2012 U.S. OLYMPIAN JOSEPH DIAZ JR AND JOSHUA CLOTTEY ADDED TO CANELO-KIRKLAND UNDERCARD

PLUS TEXAS NATIVE FIGHTERS INCLUDING JAMES LEIJA JR. TO BE FEATURED

MAY 9 AT MINUTE MAID PARK IN HOUSTON - TICKETS STILL AVAILABLE!

HOUSTON (April 8) - Everything is always bigger in Texas and that will certainly be the case when it comes to the undercard of one of the most anticipated fights of the year, **Canelo vs. Kirkland** at **Minute Maid Park** in **Houston** on **Saturday, May 9**. Chinese heavyweight sensation **Taishan** (3-0, 2 KOs), 2012 U.S Olympian **Joseph "Jo Jo" Diaz Jr.** (15-0, 10 KOs) and top contender **Joshua "Grand Master" Clottey** (38-4, 22 KOs) will headline the non-televised undercard. In addition, some of Texas' top talent will be featured on the card as well including the professional debut of welterweight **James Leija Jr.**, the son of Texas Boxing Legend Jesse James Leija.

In the previously announced main event of the evening, Mexican superstar **Canelo Alvarez** (44-1-1, 31 KOs) will face off against Texas knockout artist **James "Mandingo Warrior" Kirkland** (32-1, 28 KOs), and former three-time world champion **Humberto "La Zorrita" Soto** (65-8-2, 35 KOs) will battle unbeaten star **Frankie "Pitbull" Gomez** (18-0, 13 KOs) in the co-main event, both set to air live on HBO World Championship Boxing ® starting at 9:00 p.m. ET/PT.

Also appearing on this stacked card is Chattanooga, Tennessee's lightweight **Ryan "Blue Chip" Martin** (12-0, 7 KOs) in a eight-round bout, and Austin's **Curtis Meeks** (9-1-2, 3 KOs) will compete in a super lightweight eight-round fight against **Ramsey Luna** (12-2, 5 KOs) of Corpus Christi. San Antonio's **Cresencio Ramos** (2-0, 1 KO) will be featured in a four-round featherweight bout against **Manuel "El Tercero" Rubalcava** (2-12). Cut and Shoot, Texas's light heavyweight **Alfonso "El Tigre" Lopez** (23-3, 18 KOs) is scheduled for six rounds; Houston lightweight **Antonio Capulin** (14-0, 6 KOs) is set for a six-round competition; and Galveston heavyweight **Eugene "Mean Gene" Hill** (31-1, 21 KOs) will fight in a six-round match.

The undefeated **KeAndre Gibson** (12-0-1, 5 KOs) of St. Louis, Missouri will take on **Jorge Romero** (24-9, 21 KOs) of Culiacan, Sinaloa, Mexico in an eight-round welterweight fight. San Antonio's **Joseph Rodriguez** (8-0, 2 KOs), who is also undefeated, will fight a six-round featherweight bout against **Luis Guevara** (3-0-1, 2 KOs) of Houston, Texas. Also, seasoned fighter **Rodrigo "Gatito" Guerrero** (22-5-1, 15 KOs) of Mexico City, Mexico will fight in a 10-round bantamweight bout. All missing opponents will be announced shortly.

Tickets priced at \$350, \$150, \$100, \$50, \$25 and \$10, plus applicable fees and service charges, are available for purchase at Astros.com/boxing, the Minute Maid Park Box Office (Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.) all Ticketmaster outlets, by calling Ticketmaster at (800) 745-3000, online at www.ticketmaster.com. There is a 19-ticket limit per household.

Hailing from Beijing, seven-foot heavyweight Taishan, has captured the imagination of boxing fans both in China and in his adopted home in California. After turning professional in 2014 and scoring two quick knockouts, the 26-year-old showed that he has what it takes to win over the distance, as he scored a near-shutout victory over Roy McCrory in February of 2015. Now, it's time for Texas fans to see what all the excitement is about when he takes on Montgomery, Alabama's Ronny Hale(3-7, 3 KOs) in a four round bout.

A member of the 2012 U.S. Olympic team, South El Monte, California's Joseph "Jo Jo" Diaz is unbeaten as a professional and has earned impressive victories each step of the way. At just 22, the southpaw sensation was 6-0 in 2014, and he got 2015 off to an equally strong start on March 6 with a third-round stoppage of Juan Luis Hernandez. On May 9, he will make his third appearance in the Lone Star State in a 10-round featherweight bout.

Currently ranked third in the world by the WBA and eighth by the WBC, Joshua "Grand Master" Clottey is a Ghanaian powerhouse closing in on a 2015 title shot. A former IBF welterweight champion who owns wins over Zab Judah, Diego Corrales and Jose Luis Cruz, the 37-year-old has three straight wins since his decision losses to boxing greats Manny Pacquiao and Miguel Cotto. He most notably won the WBA International Super Welterweight title with a 12-round victory over Anthony Mundine last April.

The undefeated, Ryan "Blue Chip" Martin of Chattanooga, Tenn. has been on the fast track since his professional debut in 2013. Martin had a busy 2014, going 7-0 and most recently won a unanimous decision over Carlos Valenzuela in February of 2015. Now, he's ready to add another win to his resume on May 9 in a six round lightweight battle.

Austin, Texas native Curtis Meeks makes his return to boxing on May 9. In his last bout, Meeks won via decision against Derrik Moon in 2008 and maintained an undefeated record from 2001 to 2004. His only blemish is a split-decision loss against Humberto Chaves in August of 2004 with Meeks landing the best punches, rocking Gonzales in each of the final four rounds.

A professional since 2010, Ramsey Luna has had steady professional career in the lightweight division. He's stayed busy the past few years and most recently faced Justo Vallencillo and won via unanimous decision in May and went the distance against Ryan Kielczewski in June. In his first bout of 2015, Luna is eager to impress fans on the card of Canelo-Kirkland taking on Meeks in an eight round super lightweight bout.

A newcomer out of San Antonio, Texas, Cresencio Ramos made an impression in his professional debut with a first round knockout win against Daniel Sanchez in August of 2014. He most recently faced Jaime Hernandez in December and won the bout via unanimous decision. The Texas native is looking to continue his winning streak in his first bout of 2015 on May 9.

26-year-old Manuel "El Terco" Rubalcava of Nuevo Laredo, Mexico is a relative newcomer who is known for his stamina in the ring. With 14 fights to his name since his professional debut in 2012, Rubalcava will be looking to add a victory to his resume when he faces Cresencio Ramos in a four-round featherweight bout.

Recently named one of San Antonio's rising stars in their 20s, 24-year-old James Leija, Jr. comes from boxing royalty, as his father Jesse James Leija, Sr. is a former world champion revered in the state of Texas. But, now it's Leija, Jr.'s turn to make his mark on the boxing world, and the former amateur star and St. Mary's University graduate has the talent and charisma to make some noise in the featherweight division.

San Antonio native Eric Butler is a newcomer trying to make a name for himself in the competitive welterweight division. Fighting since late 2013, Butler is looking for a win on his first fight of 2015 when he faces James Leija, Jr. in a four round bout on May 9.

Hard-puncher, Alfonso "El Tigre" Lopez of Cut and Shoot, Texas has been on the fast track for a title since his professional debut in 2007. Undefeated from 2007 to 2010, Lopez earned the USA Texas State Super Middleweight Title and the WBC Continental Americas Super Middleweight Title. In his first fight of 2015, Lopez stopped Juan Reyna in the third round in February. Now fighting in the light heavyweight division, Lopez is looking to find success in his second fight of 2015.

Undefeated Houston native Antonio Capulin will be looking to give his hometown fans a good show on May 9. Capulin got off to an exciting start in his career, when he won via first round knockout against Thomas Almeida in his professional debut in 2010. He most recently faced Miguel Alvarez, Aason Anderson and Marteze Logan in 2014 and is looking to add another name to his list in his first fight of 2015.

Heavyweight brawler Eugene "Mean Gene" Hill is an impressive fighter that has set his sights on a world title. Already the holder of the USA Texas Heavyweight title and the World Boxing Federation International Heavyweight title, Hill has not slowed down. Having faced Jamal Woods in January and Rubin Williams in March, the fighter is ready for his third fight of 2015 in a six round fight at Minute Maid Park on May 9.

24-year-old welterweight prospect, KeAndre Gibson, who now makes his home in Las Vegas, has become quite popular in Texas, where he won impressive victories over John Nater and Jose Hernandez. In January, Gibson took on Nicaragua's Nelson Lara winning the fight via unanimous decision. In his second fight of 2015, Gibson may be facing the toughest fighter of his career when he goes up against Jorge Ramos in an eight round fight.

With 32 fights under his belt, Jorge Ramos of Culiacan, Sinaloa, Mexico, is ready for his U.S. debut on May 9. Fighting almost exclusively in Mexico, the tough fighter is known for having a heavy hand winning 21 out of 24 bouts via knockout. Ramos most recently faced Michael Perez last April and now is looking for another opportunity to impress fans in his first fight of 2015.

One of San Antonio's rising stars, Joseph Rodriguez will be looking to maintain his undefeated status when he faces Luis Guevara on May 9. A professional since 2012, he has kept busy in 2014, fighting and defeating Jesus Garza, Francisco Arellano, Jeremy Longoria and Jesus Sandoval.

Featherweight newcomer Luis Guevara of Houston is ready to impress fans in his hometown on May 9. The undefeated fighter turned professional in 2014 and most recently faced Marc Alcaraz in January of this year, winning the bout via unanimous decision.

Southpaw Mexican fighter Rodrigo "Gatito" Guerra of Mexico City will make his third appearance in the U.S. when he faces a yet to be announced fighter on May 9. Undefeated in his last three bouts against Daniel Rosas, Takahiro Shigee and Jonathan Baat, the heavy-handed bantamweight will be looking to make new fans in his Houston debut.

Canelo Alvarez vs. James Kirkland is a 12-round super welterweight bout presented by Golden Boy Promotions in association with Canelo Promotions, SMS Promotions and Leija*Battah Promotions. The fight will take place Saturday, May 9 at Minute Maid Park in Houston Texas and is sponsored by Corona Extra, Mexico - Live it to Believe it!, Fred Loya Insurance and O'Reilly Auto Parts. Doors open at 11:00 a.m. CT and first bout starts at 11:10 a.m. CT, the HBO World Championship Boxing telecast begins at 9:00 p.m. ET/PT.

An all-new edition of 24/7 Alvarez/Kirkland debuts Tuesday, May 5 at 10:00 p.m. ET/PT on HBO.

All opponents will be announced shortly. For more information, visit www.goldenboypromotions.com, www.canelopromotions.com.mx, www.smsboxing.com, www.hbo.com/boxing and www.astros.com/boxing, follow on Twitter at @GoldenBoyBoxing, @SMS_Boxing, @HBOBoxing, @Canelo, @KOKirkland, @Astros @LeijaBattahPR become a fan on Facebook at Golden Boy Facebook Page, <https://www.facebook.com/SMSBoxing>, www.facebook.com/HBOBoxing or www.facebook.com/astros and visit us on Instagram @GoldenBoyBoxing, @smsboxing and @HBOboxing, @Canelopower, @Kirklandsworld. Follow the conversation using #CaneloKirkland.

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