For two years, many have contended that Kostya Tszyu's absence from the ring had kept the rest of the junior welterweight division on hold. After three rounds in Arizona Saturday night, he put everyone right back on alert.

Finishing what he started three years ago, Kostya Tszyu returned to the ring after a twenty-two month layoff to drop rival Sharmba Mitchell four times en route to a third round stoppage Saturday night in the main event at the Glendale Arena in Glendale, Arizona. The win reaffirms Tszyu's position as the best in boxing's fully-loaded junior welterweight division, while Mitchell is forced to ponder his next move at age thirty-three, as tonight proved to be "Finished Business" on Showtime.

Known for being a slow starter, Tszyu uncharacteristically raced off of his stool nearly three-quarters across the ring to meet Mitchell at the start of the contest. Sharmba quickly adjusted, working behind his jab and offering a lot of movement early, as expected. Left hands were the main weapon of choice for the interim IBF titlist throughout the round, as he proved to be effective over the first two minutes. Tszyu was able to score with occasional uppercuts and left hooks, but seemed to be getting slightly outworked over the course of the frame.

A clash of heads in the final minute of the round produced a cut over the left eye of Tszyu. Most would panic, and in some instances fold, under such circumstances. For the long reigning leader in the deepest division in the sport, it served as little more than a motivator to get to the job done.

"Nothing concerns me in here," explained Tszyu of his reaction to the cut, which was ruled in between rounds by referee Raul Caiz as an accidental head butt. "Anything can happen to the hands or face… it's a tough business."

Mitchell was about to find out just how tough the business – and Tszyu's right hand- could be. Having won the first round, Sharmba looked to build on his early lead, landing an uppercut to start the round. After a series which including clinches and borderline low shots on the referee's blindside, Mitchell got caught with a Tszyu right uppercut. A straight right hand moments later rocked Mitchell, who would eventually go down from an ensuing flurry. Sharmba beat the count, but could not seem to regain his composure.

"He caught me with a real good punch, and I just couldn't catch my head," Mitchell described in the post-fight interview. "But one thing I would do is fight on. I'm a warrior… if I go down, I'm gonna get back up."

That he did, though it proved to merely prolong the inevitable.

Confident that the tide had permanently shifted his way, Tszyu came out for the third looking for the kill. A right hand seconds in stunned Mitchell, with a follow-up right flooring him for the

second time in the contest. Once again, he beat the referee's count, but once again, Tszyu was able to close the gap and score with a big right. To his credit, Mitchell bravely fought back, landing a right hook to escape from the corner, though it wasn't enough to stop the champion from finishing the job.

A right hand backed Mitchell to the ropes, where he was met with a right and a left to the body. Two follow up rights would produce the second knockdown of the round and third of the fight. For the third time, Mitchell got up, but would return to the canvas seconds later, courtesy of straight rights from Tszyu. This time, Caiz offered no count, waving the bout off with just twelve seconds to go in the third round.

Though he was pleased to be done with the night after only three rounds, even Tszyu was surprised with the early success he had, especially with the right hand.

"I never expected to reach so early in the fight with the right hand. With my left hand, yes. But not with the right. But… we spent a lot of time working on this particular punch, and it's working out."

It has certainly worked out well for the past seven years, as Tszyu is now 13-0 (12KO) since his lone career loss to Vince Phillips. His record overall stands at 31-1, 1 NC (25 KO), and with the endless list of names at 140, his future never looked brighter. Though for whom he elects to fight remains to be seen

"I want only big fights," proclaimed Tszyu to Showtime's Jim Gray during the post-fight interview. "If you guys show me the big fights, let's do the business again. Otherwise, we'll have to consider something else."

For the moment, that is exactly what Team Mitchell will be doing.

"It wasn't my night tonight," said Mitchell, gracious in defeat, his first since the injury stoppage loss to Tszyu three years ago as he now falls to 55-4 (31KO). "I shall move up (to welterweight) and go on. I'm able to fight another day."

After the first knockdown, Tszyu was somewhat surprised to see Mitchell get up to fight another round.

"He took tremendous shots, and to come back from those punches and fight the rest of the round. I take my hat off to him. He's a great champion."

For Sharmba, the feeling was mutual, despite all of the negative comments that have surfaced through the press in the past.

"One thing we (fighters) all understand, is that this is a business. That's what I told him after the fight, that for me, it's never personal… it's about getting the business done, about getting the money and fighting each other."

Thirty-nine months after their first contest, they once again did just that. After less than minutes of action, Tszyu once again won.

After twenty-two months, the rest of the junior welterweight division once again has its ruler back.