

Vargas overtakes Castillejo, wins unanimous decision

Written by JE Grant
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Rosemont, Ill. (Allstate Arena) – In uncharacteristically workmanlike fashion, former world titleholder Fernando Vargas, 26-2 (22 KOs), Oxnard, Calif., 154, scored a clear ten round decision victory over former WBC belt holder Javier Castillejo, 58-6 (39 KOs), Madrid, Spain, 154.

Vargas and Castillejo opened slowly with the Spaniard edging out a posing Vargas in the first round.

In round two Vargas turned up the pressure and showed a flash of his vaunted power near the close of the round to take control of the fight.

In round three, Vargas shot a sharp right hand that sent Castillejo to the canvas and put him in real trouble as the round ended. Castillejo, to his credit, recovered quickly.

Rounds four through six belonged to Vargas through his use of skillful and deliberate attack.

Castillejo in round seven staged a minor comeback, as Vargas appeared to take a breather. Castillejo landed combinations, although none of the punches had the authority to slow or hurt Vargas.

Vargas reestablished control in the final three rounds with a higher volume of punches but neither fighter was dominant at the close of the fight.

Vargas ended the fight with a large swelling on the left side of his jaw.

Scoring of the bout was 97-92, 97-92, and 98-91 all for Vargas. *The Sweet Science* scored the bout at 98-91 Vargas.

Despite having fought only 27 bouts, and being only 27 years old, [the knock on Fernando Vargas](#) of late is that he is perhaps slipping.

His tough stoppage losses to Felix Trinidad and Oscar De La Hoya, as well as gritty fights with Winky Wright and Ike Quartey, seemed to feed the idea that the edge he once possessed was gone.

Perhaps more importantly, his latest outing, against Raymond Joval (W 10, March 26, 2005), though a clear win, [did not assuage](#) those who were looking for a fiery return to prominence. Vargas' performance, measured against the standard he set early in his career, was pedestrian.

However, it was equally possible that a [more mature Vargas](#) had become intent on simply winning and not necessarily total domination – a part of his game that at once excited fans but

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played a role in his losses to Trinidad and De La Hoya.

Moving back to the junior middleweight division – a more natural fighting weight for him – from his two fight venture into the middleweight division, Vargas is [clearly intent](#) on regaining world title status.

The Castillejo bout was supposed to accomplish this goal. Castillejo, the holder of the interim WBC title, was stripped of his title ostensibly for refusing to face Ricardo Mayorga.

The WBC had, by some bizarre and unexplained calculation, determined that Mayorga should be a mandatory fight for the organization's belt.

That determination was made, despite the fact that Mayorga lost two of his last three bouts and had fought only one fight in the weight division before [being pitted against Michele Piccirillo](#) last week in Chicago in a bout promoted by Don King.

Of course it did not matter that a Mayorga-Vargas bout made more sense – but that's a story for another day.

Castillejo has proven himself a sturdy and competent journeyman fighter. In an era without multiple alphabet titles, he would have likely been a one-time world title challenger – and loser – but may have fared well as a European campaigner.

In 63 fights entering the ring in Rosemont, the 37-year-old had been stopped only once. An above average defense coupled with slightly above average power, enabled him to find to a way to the final bell throughout his career.

He gained the WBC super welterweight belt with hard fought majority decision over American journeyman Keith Mullings and defended it five times against modest opposition.

Castillejo was nearly shutout in his only bout against a member of boxing's elite, De La Hoya, and with the loss went the belt.

His most recent win over a fighter of note was a July 12, 2002 decision over current IBF junior middleweight titlist Roman Karmazin.

All-in-all, Castillejo leaves behind a commendable professional career if not a hall-of-fame campaign.

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Humberto Armando Soto, 36-6-2, 1 NC (21 KOs), Mexico, 126, scored a major upset 12 round decision over Rocky Juarez, 23-1 (16 KOs), Houston, Texas, 126, to capture something called the WBC interim featherweight title.

Soto raced to an early lead behind a strong jab and smart combinations. He captured five of

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the first six rounds before the never-say-die Juarez began to connect with hard hooks and right hands to capture round seven.

Soto regained control but ran into trouble in rounds nine and ten when he was docked a point in each round for rabbit punching. Juarez showed considerable fortitude in winning the 11th by outworking Soto.

The final round, however, was all Soto as he pulled out all the stops to close strong. Scoring of the bout was 114-113, 114-112, and 114-113 all for Soto. *The Sweet Science* scored the bout 115-111 Soto.