

## Corrales-Castillo Again

Written by Matthew Aguilar  
Wednesday, 05 October 2005 19:00

---

Most of the time, after a great fight, we are left to wait years for the rematch – if it happens at all. Sugar Ray Leonard and Thomas Hearns waged an epic showdown in 1981, when Leonard registered a come-from-behind 14th-round knockout.

Fans were salivating at the thought of a return. Little did they know it would be eight years until they saw one.

At least that's better than Hearns and Marvin Hagler. After their 1985 shootout, negotiations never advanced beyond the conversation stages.

And the world never got to see the sequel to a slugfest.

However, Saturday in Las Vegas, Diego Corrales and Jose Luis Castillo will battle just five months after engaging in the best lightweight fight in history. There has been so little time between original and sequel that the rematch can't even be described as "long-awaited," because the first one is still so fresh in every boxing enthusiast's mind.

The fights are so close together that some observers are worried about the fighters, after everything they gave of themselves on May 7.

The immediate rematch is a tribute to Corrales and Castillo, a pair of warriors who would rather risk death than not give the public what it wants.

There was no hesitancy on either man's part in signing for another trip to hell – remarkable considering the savagery of the first one.

How good was it? It ranks among the top five fights of the last 25 years. To see where it falls exactly, keep reading.

You're bound to not agree.

5. Bobby Chacon W 12 Cornelius Boza-Edwards (May 15, 1983, Las Vegas): This battle for Chacon's WBC junior lightweight title is perhaps best known for ringside color man Dr. Ferdie Pacheco practically begging for the fight to be stopped – hence his post-fight nickname of "The Fright Doctor." Indeed, Chacon had sustained nasty cuts over both eyes and was fighting on heart alone by the middle rounds. But Pacheco should have known that this was Bobby Chacon, who would rather take a sword through the eyeball than have a fight stopped due to a cut. Chacon and Boza-Edwards first fought two years earlier, when Boza stopped the aging "Schoolboy" in the 13th round in what appeared to be Chacon's swansong. But Chacon had upset rival Bazooka Limon in December 1982 to win the title, which set up the rematch with top contender Boza. And what a slugfest it was. Boza was down three times, Chacon down once, and there was enough blood in between to make Pacheco panic. Chacon's final-round

## Corrales-Castillo Again

Written by Matthew Aguilar

Wednesday, 05 October 2005 19:00

---

knockdown proved the difference as he won an unlikely split decision. Chacon-Boza 2 was named 1983's "Fight of the Year."

4. Micky Ward W 10 Arturo Gatti (May 18, 2002, Uncasville, Conn.): What makes this battle special is that neither Ward nor Gatti were considered particularly dominant at the time of their meeting. In fact, both went into the fight without titles, and looking to resurrect their sagging careers. Therefore, everybody knew it would be a great fight – and it still exceeded expectations. Gatti started by boxing, but predictably drifted from his game plan, and engaged Ward in a wicked test of wills. The microcosm for the fight was the classic 9th round, when Ward dropped Gatti with a draining left to the liver. The fight appeared to be over, but Gatti found the heart to get up and, incredibly, mount a comeback that hurt Ward. Just when you thought Ward was gone, he came back to re-stagger Gatti. It was like that through 10 rounds, and, in the end, the fight was a tribute to the human spirit as Ward captured an upset 10-round decision. It was more than 2002's "Fight of the Year"; it was, as ringside color analyst Emanuel Steward said, the fight of the millennium. Ward and Gatti did it two more times, with Gatti winning both. The '03 rubber match was that year's "Fight of the Year" as well.

3. Erik Morales W 12 Marco Antonio Barrera (Feb. 19, 2000, Las Vegas): Like Gatti-Ward, everybody knew this one would be good. They just didn't know how good. The tone was set in the very first round, when the supposedly faded and weaker-chinned Barrera attacked the WBC featherweight champion with a ferocity that hadn't been seen from him in years. Morales, never one to back down from a battle, engaged his countryman, and the war was on. The pair took turns unloading their considerable arsenals on one another, without as much as a wince. It was boxing the way it should be, straight-ahead and without reservation. In the middle rounds, Morales staggered Barrera, who came back to stagger Morales – and almost drop him. He did knock him down in the final round (though it was a bad call), and the decision appeared to be Barrera's. Not so, as Morales won a debated decision. They fought two more times, with Barrera winning the '02 rematch, and the '04 rubber match. The '00 fight and the '04 to-do were crowned "Fights of the Year". There is talk of a fourth battle.

2. Diego Corrales KO 10 Jose Luis Castillo (May 7, 2005, Las Vegas): It's a shame that this was waged before a mostly-empty auditorium at the Mandalay Bay a day before the Boxing Writer's Association of America convention. There deserved to be more eyes watching this epic encounter, in which both participants stood right in front of one another and teed off. A couple of elements make this fight slightly better than Morales-Barrera. First, both seemed to be throwing every punch with bad, hurtful, murderous intentions. There was almost no surveying the situation. It was simply stand-your-ground and fire away with everything you've got. Second, the 10th round was a drama within a drama. It's familiar now: Castillo drops Corrales twice, who gets recovery time when the mouthpiece either intentionally or unintentionally drops out of his mouth. Corrales receives an extra 40 seconds as a result of the rule, and recovers enough to stagger Castillo and, eventually, stop him seconds later. It was an emotional rollercoaster of a round, one that rates among the greatest in boxing history. There is little doubt as to what will be called '05's "Fight of the Year" and "Round of the Year." Unless, of course, the rematch gives us reason.

1. Marvin Hagler KO 3 Thomas Hearns (April 15, 1985, Las Vegas): The gold standard by

## Corrales-Castillo Again

Written by Matthew Aguilar

Wednesday, 05 October 2005 19:00

---

which all other modern fights are compared. This one had just about everything a boxing fan could want. The buildup leading up to it was extraordinary, as promoter Bob Arum conducted a multi-city tour to promote a couple of guys who were known as outstanding fighters, but little else. There was no Muhammad Ali or Sugar Ray Leonard to push this one, so Hagler and Hearn, for the most part, let their stellar boxing reputations do the talking. And, with no media darling involved, the public responded. The fight, known as "The Fight," pitted the ultra-proud champion Hagler, the defender of the middleweight title 10 times running, against superstar power-puncher Hearn, a two-division champion. Hearn, the already-legendary "Hitman", had rubbed out Hall-of-Famer Roberto Duran in two rounds 10 months prior, while Hagler struggled mightily with the Panamanian in November 1983. It set up the intriguing main act.

Once the fight started, the animosity stirred up during the multi-city tour came exploding out of both fighters, and they wasted no time getting down to business. That first round is widely regarded as the greatest three minutes in boxing history, as Hearn took an early lead by hurting Hagler, only to be holding on by the end after a brutal "Marvelous" comeback assault. The blistering pace only lessened slightly in round two, and by round three, Hearn was exhausted. However, an uppercut in the first round had spliced Hagler's forehead, and referee Richard Steele stopped the fight momentarily to have the ringside physician take a look. Hagler was allowed to continue, but time was running out. Seconds later, Hagler connected with a vicious overhand right that sent Hearn stumbling. A follow-up right sent Hearn to the canvas, and though the Hitman courageously got up, Steele wisely stopped it. In the end, it was the wildest eight minutes in boxing history, a street fight between the two best boxers on the planet.

The first Corrales-Castillo fight was great. And, if it's any greater, Hagler-Hearn could be in danger of falling off its perch.