

Boxing News: Castillo Cruises to Victory

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EL PASO, Tex. (Feb. 4, 2006) – Styles do indeed make fights and – for 36 minutes – Rolando Reyes’s counter-punching style totally frustrated Jose Luis Castillo. At the finish, however, it was the former two-time World Boxing Council (WBC) lightweight champion who came away with a lopsided 12-round decision Saturday on SHOWTIME.

In an exciting, extremely close SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING co-feature at the Don Haskins Center on the University of Texas El Paso (UTEP) campus, Jose Armando Santa Cruz successfully defended his North American Boxing Federation (NABF) 135-pound title with a hard-fought, unanimous 12-round decision over Edner Cherry.

Castillo (54-7-1, 47 KOs), of Sonora, Mexico, did not get the emphatic knockout victory he would have preferred but he did more than enough to win by the scores of 119-108, 117-110 and 116-111. The victory, while not an artistic success, sets up an eagerly awaited third fight between Castillo and current WBC lightweight boss Diego “Chico” Corrales, perhaps in June, on SHOWTIME. One of the most highly-anticipated rubber matches in the history of boxing was supposed to take place Saturday here, but Corrales injured a rib during training three weeks ago and withdrew.

“Please don’t blame me for tonight. It was not my fault,” Castillo, who had a point deducted for a low blow in the opening seconds of the seventh round, said. “I thought it would be a tough fight but not a dangerous one. But I was prepared. Reyes didn’t come to fight. But he can now say he went 12 rounds with Jose Luis Castillo.”

Reyes (26-4-2, 16 KOs), of Oxnard, Calif., entered the ring having won five straight and 19 out of 20. But the World Boxing Organization (WBO) No. 5 and International Boxing Federation (IBF) No. 14 contender never could mount an offense.

“Rolando is a much better fighter than what he showed tonight,” his trainer Robert Garcia said. “Castillo is a great fighter, but Rolando showed him too much respect.”

In the fight of the night, neither Santa Cruz nor Cherry showed the other any respect as they took turns exchanging their best shots in a crowd-pleasing battle that featured numerous momentum swings.

Santa Cruz (22-1, 12 KOs), of Los Angeles, got dumped on the seat of his trunks from a counter right hand with a minute remaining in the third and was hurt in a sensational eighth round, but still managed to get the hard-earned triumph by the scores of 114-113, 115-112 and an out-of-line 117-110.

“I hope everybody was happy with this fight, especially SHOWTIME,” Santa Cruz said. “Cherry was tough and determined. He hurt me a few times, but I knew I had to keep working and trying to be the aggressor. I thought I did really well down the stretch. But I know I could have worked

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the body more.”

Cherry (19-4-2, eight KOs), of Wauchula, Fla., by way of Nassau, Bahamas, was disappointed with the decision, particularly with the scorecard that had him losing by seven points.

“I fought as hard as I could,” he said. “I thought I gave a good performance. I definitely thought I won. He was throwing a lot of punching, but I was blocking some of them. I knew I was hurting him way more than he was hurting me. That they said I lost by seven points was wrong.”

SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING’s Steve Albert and Al Bernstein called the action from ringside with Karyn Bryant serving as roving reporter. The producer of the SHOWTIME telecast was David Dinkins Jr. with Bob Dunphy directing.

In addition to Monday night, Saturday’s fights also will be replayed in their entirety on SHOWTIME TOO at 11 p.m. ET/PT on Tuesday, Feb. 7.