

## Result from Vegas: Corrales Totally Outclasses Castillo

Written by Phil Woolever  
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Fool me twice; shame on your entire freakin' camp.

That repackaged mantra pretty much sums up the response around the world of professional pugilism, from pundit to purist to profiteer, being adopted toward an increasingly disgraced Jose Luis Castillo and his apparently hapless, ethically challenged entourage.

If Castillo and his related cronies had conducted their business like a worthwhile champion should in making the weight limit, we probably would have seen another great fight, another positive showcase for an often-embattled enterprise.

Instead, while there was a first-rate title contest inside the Thomas and Mack Center Saturday, it wasn't the scheduled blockbuster between Castillo and archrival Diego Corrales. The show went on, but it wasn't The Show.

For the record, IBF Flyweight ruler Vic Darchinyan, 112, now 25-0 (21), blasted out rugged Luis Maldonado, 112, 33-1-1 (25), at 1:38 in the eighth round of an elevated, Showtime televised main event. It was a good rumble, but no real substitute for the "free cable" finale to a classic trilogy.

Castillo blew that, and the Nevada Commission should come down hard. Zab Judah and Roger Mayweather went off in the heat of the moment. It's a whole different ballgame with something as apparently thought out as Castillo's ruse about his ability to make the weight limit.

Castillo's attitude seemed to be that Corrales should agree to meet him at any weight no problem. Even with that ridiculous attitude, the contest might have been salvaged if Castillo or one of his advisors had enough consideration to look ahead.

Corrales showed up, symbolically, at the deflated production and got his share of love from what fans there were. Castillo should have been made to attend, and hear what the paying customers thought about his cancellation.

"This fight should have happened," said a bitter but upbeat Corrales to Showtime's Jim Grey. "I feel like the whole card was still salvageable. He could have called [earlier] so we could agree on another weight, where I wouldn't have to go through more than him. I came really close to fighting anyway. I just wanted to see him sacrifice something. He should know what he's done. He's disgraced everything we accomplished."

The bigger the spotlight going in to an event like this, the deeper public scrutiny will be regarding Castillo's indiscretion. Still, one good slugfest and Castillo will probably be back in the public's good graces.

There was plenty of intrigue and debate regarding this fight's potential result, right up until a few

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moments before the ill-fated weigh-in.

As word spread about Castillo's second straight debacle at the scale, reaction went from curious disbelief about how a top camp could be so careless, to frustration and anger over how a multi-million dollar production could proceed without better monitoring, especially considering previous concerns regarding Castillo's weight.

It turned out a lot of key people put too much trust in third parties.

"It was amazing, and not in a good way," Keith Kizer of the Nevada Commission told Showtime. "The WBC assured us in May he was on target (for 135). Mr. Castillo assured us he was on target. He was warned there might be dire consequences."

"These (Castillo's) people are absolute nuts," shrugged co-promoter Bob Arum. "We contacted them every other day. The only reports we had were that he was on weight. The report was he went to sleep (the night before the weigh in) at 137 pounds. We had all been lied to."

About their heralded role as watchdogs, the WBC was as quiet as the rafters at Thomas and Mack Center on Saturday night.

For Castillo, finding further favor with the promotional powers that be may be trickier than dodging a Corrales uppercut. Arum seemed genuinely disgusted, and while money talks, Steve Wynn whispers like the air above his resort skyline.

From the looks of things, much of the Thomas and Mack crowd was made up of high rollers who had made the trip for the cancelled main event. The less happy the players, the less happy the house.

Hopefully the entire undercard (who all made weight and saved the evening) got a bonus, but it's a long shot they got anywhere near the tips of the VIP hostess parade.

Against Corrales at any weight over 140 pounds, Castillo may well have been the most logical pick for a sensational victory that would further his status in boxing lore.

Superiority at 135 pounds turned out to be a hollow, moot point.

Showing up with the basic character it takes to fulfill contractual obligations for a potentially historic fight, plus the considerable investment of deserving fans and supporters, is another matter completely.

In terms of class, it ended up all Corrales, no contest.