

Jimmy Lange Defeats Thomas Wilt by TKO

Written by Aaron Tallent

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Former *Contender* star Jimmy Lange (27-3-1) put himself back in middleweight contention with a tenth round TKO of Thomas Wilt (20-6) at Fairfax, Virginia's Patriot Center on Saturday night.

"I thought it was a good learning experience...Nothing can take the place of rounds," said Lange.

A win was crucial for the northern Virginian who found his career at a crossroads coming into this bout. Lange had lost his rematch with *Contender* foe Joey Gilbert by third round TKO in front of his hometown fans in February of this year. Gilbert originally beat Lange by decision on the show, causing his initial elimination.

His opponent, Wilt, a five time Pennsylvania State Champion made him earn the victory. The blue-collar fighter from Altoona, Pennsylvania, put in a gutsy performance.

"This was the biggest fight of [Wilt's] career by far," said Lange. "He was coming at me with every bit he had."

With Angelo Dundee in his corner, Lange entered the Patriot Center's crowd of more than 3,600 under a tremendous amount of pressure. Not only was he coming off a loss, it would be the first time had to go ten rounds in more than two years.

Lange came out at the opening bell circling the ring and peppering Wilt with jabs. Occasionally, he would close in and fire body shots. When Wilt would move in, Lange managed to elude any entanglements, except in one instance where Wilt landed a vicious left hook to Lange's body.

Lange kept his distance in the second round as well. However, Wilt was able to land his right hand more frequently, causing the two to engage in close-range fighting. The round ended with Lange throwing and landing a flurry of punches.

Both fighters stuck and moved through rounds three and four. In the fifth, Wilt jarred Lange in the corner with a right hand. Later in the round, Wilt tagged him with a left hook, but Lange responded with a series of rights to end the round.

Early in the sixth, Wilt landed another left hook. Lange responded with a barrage of body and head shots, which brought the crowd to its feet. Towards the end of the round, Wilt threw a left, and Lange fired back with several rights.

The two traded back and forth throughout the seventh and eighth, with neither gaining the edge. In the ninth, Lange put Wilt into the ropes with a left jab and knocked out his mouthpiece with a series of punches, changing the pace of the fight. It carried over to the tenth, when Lange staggered his opponent with a body shot. When Wilt was unresponsive to a series of punches, the fight was stopped. While Lange was pleased with the experience, he knows he will have to

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improve in the future.

“As I move up the ladder, that performance will not cut it,” said Lange.

Dundee acknowledges that Lange needs more work but was pleased with performance and classiness of his fighter.

“My profession right now is a little low,” said Dundee. “You know why? We don’t have more kids like [Lange].”

Lange and his camp are not certain when his next bout will be, although he is ready to get back in the ring soon. As for Wilt, he says he would not like to end on a loss and will try to fight a couple of more times before retiring.

The fight card had two co-main events. In one, super middleweight Larry “The Laser” Marks (29-8) beat Washington, D.C. favorite Purcell “Hard Rock” Miller (22-5-1) by decision in an eight-round slugfest. In the other, light welterweight Dorin Spivey, “The Pride of Portsmouth,” (34-4) won a runaway unanimous decision over Roberto Valenzuela (37-26-2). Spivey had struggled a bit before coming under trainer Pernel Whitaker’s tutelage. The former lightweight, light welterweight, and welterweight champion feels he can still get Spivey over the home into title contention.

“Tonight was definitely an improvement,” said Whitaker. “We’re going to see if we can get another win and then go after a top-ten opponent.”

No word yet on when Spivey’s next fight will be.