

Corrales Survives the Nightmare Week that Was

Written by Benn Schulberg

Wednesday, 11 October 2006 19:00

If you think your week was bad then take solace in what former Junior Lightweight and Lightweight champion Diego Corrales had to endure. Battling to make the 135-pound limit for his fight against Joel Casamayor turned out to be too great a task despite the fact that Corrales basically tortured himself to get down to the lightweight limit. No food and little water for four days left him dangerously weak and dehydrated, coupled with intense three-a-day workouts to shake the weight, made Corrales' week leading up to the fight more of a crash course in persecution than anything else. In the end, there wasn't anymore to give, no more sweat to burn off, and as he eventually tipped the scales at 139-pounds, he was left both depleted and devastated. A doctor and intravenous fluids were waiting for him in his room, and by the night of the fight, Corrales was remarkably able to climb into the ring in what turned out to be a controversial loss to Joel Casamayor.

Wait, his week gets worse. On the eve of the fight, Corrales' Escalade truck was snatched from the Mandalay Bay parking lot while he was being revived in his room following the weigh-in. Adding insult to injury, stolen with the truck was trainer Joe Goossen's boxing equipment for the fight.

"It's been a long week," Goossen said. "When was the last time you saw me with stubble on my face. I haven't shaved in three days. This has never happened to me before."

Never in Goossen's career had he brought a fighter to the scales and not made weight. Corrales had never been off-target either and he had struggled to make 135-pounds just four months earlier in what turned out to be a non-fight against the overweight Jose Luis Castillo. Both trainer and fighter thought they could do it one more time, but in hindsight, tempting fate was a foolish decision because as it turned out, making 135-pounds was too much to ask of a now 29-year-old fighter with a 5'11" frame.

At lunch before the fight, the weariness was evident on Joe Goossen's face as he explained what happened to his fighter. "We did everything we could. He didn't eat for four days and trained three-times-a-day. We even went to the sauna at 1AM and he almost passed out. I had to help him back to his room. His body just shut down and said that's it."

As for the embarrassment of not making weight, Goossen said he felt responsible for what happened to his fighter but at the same time felt confident that he went to every length to get the weight off. "If Guantanamo's prisoners were treated like Diego's been this week, then we'd be breaking the law," Goossen explained.

Just two weeks earlier, officials weighed Corrales at his Los Angeles training camp to make sure he was on mark to make 135-pounds. He weighed 142-pounds on that day, a normal weight for him at that point. The problem though was not that Corrales was ill prepared and didn't train hard, as has been speculated, but rather that his body just gave out after too many years of losing too much weight. Corrales is no longer a lightweight and he paid the price for it.

Corrales Survives the Nightmare Week that Was

Written by Benn Schulberg

Wednesday, 11 October 2006 19:00

A \$240,000 fine to the Nevada State Athletic Commission (half went to Casamayor) and a \$100,000 payment to Casamayor as incentive to fight the heavier man.

Never one to deflect blame, Corrales took full responsibility for failing to make weight, explaining to the media that he gambled and lost in betting that he could get down to 135-pounds one more time. I don't blame Corrales though or trainer Joe Goossen for taking the fight. Ultimately, it was promoter Gary Shaw who made the lightweight matchup against Casamayor even though his fighter told him the last time out that enough was enough at 135-pounds because of the difficulty in making the weight. Corrales doesn't know how to say no to a challenge and once Shaw dangled the dough in front of him for a third and deciding fight against his heated Cuban rival, there was no turning back. Of course Corrales shouldn't have risked the tenuous weight issue, but he never should've gotten the chance in the first place. He needed his promoter to do what he's supposed to do and look out for his best interest, but instead Gary Shaw neglected his fighter's health and took a nice payday, even signing Casamayor in the process.

Despite the starvation, the dehydration, the loss of his lightweight titles on the scale and the subsequent fines that followed, the stolen truck, and the eventual split-decision loss to Casamayor, Diego Corrales emerged from his horrific week in amazing spirits. After a surprisingly festive dinner with his family and Shane Mosley, Corrales hit the Vegas nightclubs until 3 AM and if you hadn't seen the fight earlier that night you would've thought he won. There was the small nick above his brow that suggested he'd been in a fight, but that was the only blemish. After the weigh-in, there were calls for the NSAC or for Corrales' team to cancel the fight due to his severely weakened condition that almost landed him in the hospital and that critics believed would land him in the hospital in an even worse state at the hands of his opponent. But that didn't happen and Corrales came out of the fight with his health intact, reason enough to celebrate into the Vegas night.

There was no sulking or excuses for what happened. Only a disappointed shake of the head that quickly transformed into a confident look to the future, to the welterweight division and the exciting opportunities that lie there. Corrales wants Antonio Margarito first. When his brother-in-law reminded him that Margarito is a bigger, stronger fighter than he's used to and that maybe a couple tune-up bouts to get him acclimated to the new division would benefit him, Corrales, the fearless warrior, responded in his usual style.

"Why should I wait to fight Margarito? All my sparring partners have been welterweights because they're the only ones that can keep up with me."

A new chapter now begins in the Hall-of-Fame career of Diego Corrales as he gets ready to tackle the welterweight division. Some of the biggest names in the sport make their home there including the likes of Floyd Mayweather, Rickey Hatton, and Shane Mosley. Corrales can't wait to join that all-star cast and prove to the boxing world that he can bang with the big boys now that his lightweight days are thankfully behind him.