

Hatton Recaptures IBF Jr. Welter Crown

Written by David A. Avila

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LAS VEGAS—Great Britain's Ricky "The Hitman" Hatton returned to the junior welterweight division with a few of his friends and recaptured the IBF world title from Colombia's Juan Urango. The win sets up a match with Mexico's Jose Luis Castillo who also won on Saturday.

It was Hatton's legs and legion of fans that carried him to victory before more than 8,000 in attendance at the Paris Hotel in Las Vegas. Now Hatton will probably face Castillo in early summer. With an estimated 4,000 fans arriving from Great Britain it was essentially home cooking for Hatton who hit and held throughout the fight and won by unanimous decision. The fans regularly sang "Here we go, here we go" and "God save the Queen." Urango raised his hand after every round but nothing could change the outcome.

Hatton moved from side to side, attacked with rapid combinations and followed that by grabbing Urango to keep him from countering. Though British fans in attendance were ecstatic with the tactics, other fans were bored.

"It was like fighting in my backyard," said Hatton (42-0, 30 KOs). "I want to thank everybody from Manchester, England who came to support me."

Urango (17-1-1, 13 KOs) had no support, even from the referee who allowed the British fighter to grab and hold throughout the fight. But the muscular boxer tried to pinpoint body punches to no avail.

The judges scored it 119-109 for Hatton. There were no knockdowns.

In the other main match, Castillo (55-7-1, 47 KOs) struggled in the higher weight class against Cameroon's Herman Ngoudjo. After fighting so long as a lightweight, the extra five pounds seemed to make a difference. From the beginning Castillo seemed listless at the 140-pound division. Ngoudjo (15-1, 9 KOs) was able to withstand the Mexican's body attack and fire back combinations.

After 12 rounds the judges scored it a split-decision 115-113 for Ngoudjo and 115-113 twice for Castillo.

Other bouts

Undefeated light heavyweight prospects Jon Ibbotson (8-0, 4 KOs) of Sheffield, England and Shannon Anderson (3-1) of Pennsylvania needed only 1:35 to decide the loser. A left hook during an exchange dropped Anderson for the first time early. Another left hand short-circuited Anderson's legs and down he went again. Referee Jay Nady immediately stopped the fight and ruled Ibbotson the winner.

Matthew Hatton (30-3-1, 12 KOs) scored a technical knockout over New Yorker Frank

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Houghtaling (19-13-5) at the end of the seventh round for the IBF International welterweight title. Hatton dropped the New Yorker in the fourth round with a double left jab followed by the right. After that, Hatton steamrolled Houghtaling until the corner advised the referee to halt the fight.