

In L.A., Rosales, Vilorio and Martirosyan Win

Written by David A. Avila
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Mexico's Michel Rosales seems to be back on track after a slow first round against Colombia's Dairo Esalas in a junior welterweight bout, he lowered the boom for a knockout win on Friday.

Under a small tent, Rosales (14-1, 12 KOs) seems to have recovered from the brutal knockout loss he suffered a year ago and disposed of Esalas (30-11, 25 KOs) in the second round in front of a small crowd of 600 who withstood the pouring rain at the Alameda Swap Meet in Los Angeles.

The fight was promoted by Top Rank, and shown by Telefuturo and Tecate.

It was interesting to see if Rosales, a resident of San Luis Potosi, had fully recovered from the brutal loss he suffered against Jesus Soto Karass in Illinois back on October 2006. Though he had his moments too, the sight of Rosales bludgeoned in the 11th round was not a good sign for his future.

A first round knockout of Americo Santos several months ago was a good start to recovery but not too revealing. Fighting last-minute replacement Esalas could have been disastrous.

In the first round Rosales didn't seem to realize he could slip or block a punch as the hard-hitting Esalas landed several blows. But that was just a warm up.

Rosales, 24, began blocking shots and slipping punches in the second round and caught Esalas with a counter left hook that floored him immediately. Though he beat the count, it was clear his legs had not recovered as Rosales charged him firing punches at will. A right hand snuck through Esala's guard and several more punches were fired and down went the Colombian at 2:06 of the second round.

Maybe Rosales is back?

Former junior flyweight world titleholder Brian "Hawaiian Punch" Vilorio returned to the ring as a junior bantamweight and found the heavier weight division a little tougher in beating Jose Bernal.

Now trained by Oxnard's Robert Garcia, it was apparent that Vilorio's timing wasn't quite down as he tried to fire power combinations against Bernal. Often, he smothered his own punches when attacking the veteran Colombian.

Around the fifth round Vilorio, a former U.S. Olympian, began to find his groove and land combinations without taking much in return. But it was frustrating to see Vilorio concentrate to the head instead of the 37-year-old body of Bernal. Finally, in the eighth and final round, a well-placed right hand to the body dropped the Colombian. He beat the count and held on tight in survival mode for the remainder of the final round as Vilorio targeted the body

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Vilorio was the unanimous winner.

It's a good mix with Garcia in Vilorio's corner. Expect Garcia's boxing philosophy to sink in after at least one more fight. Vilorio has had several trainers since leaving Freddie Roach more than a year ago. He'll also be fighting at a lower weight division. He looked heavy.

Fellow US Olympian Vanes Martirosyan (18-0, 12 KOs) experienced six rugged rounds with Clarence Taylor (12-13, 6 KOs) in a junior middleweight fight. Though he won every round, he never dominated Taylor.

A six round bout between undefeated junior lightweights turned out to be especially well-matched between Mexico's Juanito Garcia and Puerto Rico's Gamalier Rodriguez (5-1-2).

After a tepid first round, the Puerto Rican struck first with a vicious right hand that nearly dropped Garcia. He landed on the ropes and managed to evade the killing blow for the next 30 seconds. Then he fought his way out of trouble.

The third round saw Garcia (14-0, 5 KOs) return to his strong left jab and dictate the pace against the clever Puerto Rican fighter. The momentum changed for good from then on as Garcia managed to catch Rodriguez with more punches the remainder of the six-round bout and walked away with a decision win.