

Anthony Peterson Gets Interim Title

Written by Michael Woods
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He is what he is, and he isn't what he isn't.

Anthony Peterson showed himself to be a busy, smart boxer who pumps the jab, puts his punches together pretty well, stays alert defensively and is extremely well conditioned. No, he's not a slugger who tries to take off heads, an assassin in short pants who will blast his way from the ranks of prospect to contender to champion. But Peterson did what he had to do Thursday night, in workmanlike if unspectacular fashion at the Orleans in Las Vegas, and scored the NABF interim lightweight crown with a unanimous decision victory over Fernando Trejo, an undersized, overmatched resume builder.

The 23-year-old Peterson, from DC, weighed 133, while the 33-year-old 13-year pro Trejo weighed 132 for the scheduled 12 rounder.

In the first round, Peterson got loose winging a peppery jab. Trejo showed he'd come to tangle by unloading with a couple of hooks. But it looked like he'd get picked apart by plentiful jabs if he didn't figure out a gameplan quickly. In the second, Trejo again had a high guard, and a viewer waited for Peterson to crack his ribs in response. Peterson grunts whenever he throws; I couldn't figure out if it's a different sound for different punches or the same volume and pitch on all occasions. In the third, the undersized Trejo still hadn't chosen an effective strategy. His hands are slow, so he relies on his power rather than volume, and Peterson's D was pretty sharp. Peterson clanged some left hooks to the body, and I had to turn down the volume on the TV, as his grunts were so loud, I was afraid Annabelle (14 ½ months) would awake. In the fourth, Peterson got in a nice smack with a right to the chin. Trejo didn't buckle, but one wondered how long before he'd wilt under pressure.

It was more of the same in the fifth, with the DC hitter snapping the jab, mixing in hooks, and capping the round with a nifty right uppercut. In the sixth round, Peterson got in Trejo's grill with more insistence. He placed punches low and then high, deftly, and showed judges he was of a different caliber. Cornerman Barry Hunter told Peterson not to back up after the round. In the seventh, we heard Versus analyst Wally Matthews say he felt like he was watching a fencer. Nick Charles, on play by play, took issue, and said he thought Peterson was doing the job. Matthews wanted more fire. Hey, the kid is a boxer. He's not a bomber, so he'll be the type to pick away, win rounds. He is what he is, and what he is, is a solid pro, learning on the job, making his way up the ranks slowly but surely. My two and half cents.

In the eighth, the crowd indicated they wanted Peterson to step it up. Matthews again harped on Peterson, basically saying that he lacked fire. I say, again, he knows his limitations, and doesn't try to be something he's not. C'mon, Peterson isn't a hugging and holding addict. He is busy, and no, he doesn't try to take his foe's head off, but that is because basically he knows he often can't. Trejo did connect with some shots, but they were zipless punches. In the tenth, Peterson

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did step it up. He bulled forward with more purpose, at least in the first half of the round. In the 11th round, we heard that Peterson hurt his left hand, and his trainer, and old school motivator, told him he was born with two mitts. He cracked a right hand, and still Matthews found fault, saying it was an arm punch. He closed the round with about 12 tosses in a row, unanswered. In the 12th and final round, Peterson showed ample energy, and you have to laud his cardio, if nothing else, Wally. Trejo did what he came to do, survive, and stay off the suspension list. The crowd reaction was muted. Then, the scores were rendered and read: 120-108, 120-108, 119-109.

Peterson had the punches thrown (918-892) and landed (296-157) edge.

In sum, I think Peterson knows he's not a slugger and he fights accordingly, a wise move against a foe who has not been stopped by punches in 15 losses. Let's not try to make him into something we'd like him to be, if he's not suited for it.

Peterson went to 27-0, while the Mexican Trejo fell to 19-13.

In the TV opener, 22-year-old Vanes Martirosyan kicked it up to 20-0, taking a UD from 32-year-old 12-year vet Angel Hernandez (28-7) in a scheduled ten-round junior middleweight scrap.

The 2004 US Olympian Martirosyan, a Californian, now fights out of Texas. He looked crisper than Hernandez with a ramrod right straight out of the gate. Vanes scored a knockdown with a right uppercut, and had 1:50 left in the round to get a quickie stop over his foe, who looks bodily like he should be at 147. Hernandez did manage to make it out of the first.

In the second, Hernandez worked the head movement more. In the third, Vanes used his height and reach advantage to good effect. Some body work on the less than ripped Hernandez would've been a good idea, too. He could've also piled up some shots, instead of going the one-and-done route. On to the fourth. Vanes moved laterally, as he searched for prime openings. Hernandez mad him miss fairly, surprising after what we saw in the first. In the fifth round, Vanes still wasn't doing any body work. I understand, such a tall guy has to bend the knees to go low, but he'll be taller than most of his foes, so he may want to work on that.

In the sixth round, Hernandez tapped Vanes with a quick right, but his power level didn't phase Vanes. Martirosyan did, however, suffer a cut over his right eye, so watches wondered if maybe the vet would take advantage, and target the tear. In the seventh, Vanes didn't veer off track; the cut was tended to, and he kept the vet at bay with a busy jab. In round eight, still, no body work by Vanes. You know, he could jab the solar plexus, or the upper abs, too...In the ninth, the vet still stuck around, making Vanes miss, throwing every now and then. He stuck out his chest, and spread his arms wide apart in clowning fashion, to what end I'm not sure. In the tenth and final round, Vanes hopped, still showing good spring in his legs. The vet clowned and smiled again, not showing that he was in it to win it at all. He ate a right uppercut that made him blink twice, and hold more than he did before. Vanes added zest to his shots, looking for the late inning walkoff, but we went to the card. The scores were: 100-89 x 3.