

Cotto/Margarito Undercard Report

Written by Ronan Keenan
Friday, 25 July 2008 19:00

In the night's chief support bout, Colombia's Cesar Canchila utilized classical boxing skills to claim the World Boxing Association's interim 112-pound title with a unanimous points win over Giovanni Segura.

The powerful Mexican southpaw started the bout quickly, winging wild left hands that visibly shook his 26-year-old opponent. Canchila, 27-1 (21), attempted to trade with Segura, but that proved futile as a heavy right hook briefly felled the Colombian midway through the second. Realizing he could not match Segura for power, Canchila sought to box from a distance, and consequently evaded most of California resident's hooks.

Segura, 19-1-1 (15), began to visibly tire from the sixth frame as his output dropped significantly, while Canchila began to land with long range jabs and right hands on the flagging Mexican. As the bout entered the final third, Segura began to retreat, prompting Canchila to adopt a more aggressive approach.

The final rounds of the contest were relatively one-paced as Canchila frequently tagged Segura along the ropes, resulting in a prominent swelling under the Mexican's right eye. The judges scores of 117-110 (twice) and 115-112 mean that Canchila will now face "regular" WBA titlist Brahim Asloum for the unified belt.

Colorado's junior welterweight hope Mike Alvarado moved his professional record to 22-0 (15) by registering a fourth round knockout of former lightweight champion Cesar Bazan. The 33-year-old Mexican has adopted a journeyman status in recent years, losing five out of his last ten outings and after a spirited display over the opening three rounds he apparently ran out of steam in the fourth.

Alvarado was relatively static in the first and consequently got tagged with numerous uppercuts from the veteran, but thereafter the American began to put combinations together and eventually out-muscled a tiring Bazan. Hooks to the body sent Bazan, 47-11-1 (30), into the ropes and he gamely fired back, but Alvarado remained undeterred and a further assault to the ribs hurt the Mexican. A flush left uppercut then convinced Bazan to take a knee where he remained as the referee counted to ten at 2:46.

"I know 140-pounds in a tough division but I'm ready for anyone in the top ten now," said Alvarado after the contest.

In a performance that justified his blue-chip prospect status, 20-year-old Bernabe Concepcion knocked out Adam Carrera in the third round of a junior featherweight contest. A relaxed-looking Concepcion, 26-1-1 (15), used fluid footwork to position himself inside the long reach of the taller Carrera, where he was able to unload with quick hooks and uppercuts. The Freddie Roach-trained Filipino threatened Carrera with sharp left hooks to the head, but it was a left to ribcage that felled the California native in the third.

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Carrera, 19-3 (8), quickly rose to his feet, but a right cross to the head sent him down heavily, with referee Joe Cortez subsequently reaching the count of ten at 2:14 of the round.

Puerto Rico's Jesus Rojas maintained his undefeated record by dominating the resilient Anyetei Laryea over eight rounds in junior featherweight action. Watched by compatriot Miguel Cotto at ringside, the 21-year-old Rojas attacked Laryea with two-fisted assaults for much of the contest, but was unable to subdue the Ghanaian on route to a unanimous decision win by scores of 77-74 and 78-73 (twice).

At times, Rojas, 13-0 (10), was a stationary target for Laryea's left jab, but the Caguas resident quickly responded, hurting his opponent on numerous occasions, with the right cross his most potent weapon. A sharp one-two combination floored Laryea in the third, but he managed to recover, showing the punch resistance that has become a trademark for many Accra fighters. A sustained attack from Rojas could have prompted a stoppage, but Laryea, 17-6 (8), managed to survive the round and thereafter Rojas seemed content to box for the points victory.

An accidental clash of heads in the third round of Luis Cervantes' lightweight bout with Brian Ramirez resulted in a deep gash above the latter's left eye, prompting the ringside physician to advise the halting of the contest. As four rounds of the fight were not completed, the result was a no decision. Cervantes, 7-3-3 (2), got off to a quick start, landing numerous straight right hands, but just as Ramirez, 5-1 (3) began to increase his offense the head-clash occurred.

In another bout with a premature ending, Mexico's 24-year-old Benjamin Flores moved his record to 19-3 (6) by winning a unanimous technical decision over Vernie Torres after seven completed rounds. An accidental head clash in the final frame resulted in a cut above Flores' right eye, with the ringside physician deeming the fighter unable to continue.

The 34-year-old Torres, 27-12 (15), sported Manny Pacquiao trunks and a southpaw stance, but the similarities with his Filipino compatriot ended there. Aside from a heavy left cross, Torres' offense was limited as Flores frequently smothered him onto the ropes while routinely landing with a left hook to the body, right cross combination. The judges' scores were 78-73 and 79-72 (twice).

Junior lightweight Luis Cruz, 7-0 (5), wasted little time in getting the night's action under way, scoring a first round technical knockout of Jaime Villa, 5-6-1 (2), at 2:59 of the first round.