

Kayode, Franco Escape With Wins On ShoBox

Written by The Sweet Science
Saturday, 05 February 2011 08:28



Who here thought Ianuzzi got robbed? (photo by Tom Casino)**PROSPECTS LUIS FRANCO & LATEEF KAYODE**

ESCAPE WITH CLOSE VICTORIES

IN FIRST *SHOBOX* OF 2011

Catch The Replay On Tuesday, Feb. 8 At 10 p.m. ET/PT On SHO 2

SANTA YNEZ, CALIF. (Feb. 4, 2011) – Facing the toughest opponent of his short professional career, undefeated featherweight prospect and Cuban Olympian **Luis**

Franco

eked out a close split-decision victory over the extremely tough and powerful

Leonilo Miranda

in Friday's main event of

ShoBox: The New Generation

on

SHOWTIME®

from Chumash Casino Resort in Santa Ynez, Calif.

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In an equally close and hotly-contested co-feature, **Freddie Roach**-trained **Lateef Kayode's** consecutive knockout streak ended at 14 when he scored a unanimous decision over the game and determined **Nicholas Iannuzzi**.

Heading into the bout with Miranda, Franco (9-0, 5 KOs) and his camp thought they were just one step away from a title shot. But, in what has become characteristic for prospects in dangerous matchups on *ShoBox*, Franco got the toughest test of his career and barely escaped with a victory, scored 97-94 Miranda, 97-93 Franco and 96-94 Franco.

In the first round, Miranda (26-3, 25 KOs) scored what appeared to be a legitimate knockdown that was ruled a slip by referee Marcos Rosales. Franco came back strong in the next few rounds, establishing his game plan and landing an assortment of solid combinations. In what may become an early Round of the Year candidate for *ShoBox*, both fighters came out blazing in the fifth and exchanged a series of blows that hurt and dazed both parties.

Franco and Miranda cooled down a little in the sixth and seventh before stepping on the gas to close out the fight in the ninth and tenth rounds. Throughout the bout, Franco employed a more tactical approach and a stronger defense, while Miranda used a more crowd-pleasing, aggressive and wild game plan.

"Miranda hits very hard, but I felt I worked faster than him," said Franco, who claimed he was not hurt in the first round and that the referee was correct in ruling it a slip. "It was a close, even fight. He has lots of experience. We studied video and wanted to keep the fight tactical."

ShoBox color commentator and boxing expert **Steve Farhood** scored it a draw.

"The positive for Franco was that he ended up fighting the other guy's fight and had the heart to eke out a win," Farhood said. "The negative is the same criticism as before – that Franco hasn't shown the ability to punch with power."

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A frustrated and disappointed Miranda pleaded his case for a rematch following the decision.

“It was a close fight,” Miranda said. “I thought it was at least a draw. He ran and I kept looking for him in the middle of the ring. I know I could beat him the next time. I wanted to fight but he kept running.”

Kayode (16-0, 14 KOs) came into the bout as one of the most talked about prospects in boxing and riding a staggering KO streak before he ran into Iannuzzi, who was tough both physically and stylistically for the Nigerian-born Hollywood resident.

Entering the fight, Iannuzzi (16-2, 9 KOs) knew he couldn't stand in front of Kayode and trade punches. So the Tampa resident danced and moved to avoid shots, often lunging in to throw quick jabs and combos before either locking up or jumping back out of harms way.

Clearly frustrated, Kayode was unable to fight his game, and, for just the second time in his career, he was pushed to the distance, scored 98-91, 97-92, 95-94.

“The decision is fine,” Kayode said. “It was a good fight. I learned more from going the distance.

“Everyone has a different style and he tried to pull me to his. He was running too much. He would jab and run back, but he wasn't hurting me with his combos. He was running and grabbing so I couldn't hit the body.”

Kayode's legendary trainer was also frustrated with the fight but remained optimistic.

“We had a little trouble with his style,” Roach said. “It's a learning experience. Lateef blocked a lot of the shots and I think he landed the harder ones.

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“It’s a good learning experience fighting a guy like this and it will help him in the long run. We don’t expect the knockouts, when they come it’s a bonus.”

Farhood believes that Iannuzzi may have revealed a chink in the seemingly perfect cruiserweight prospect.

“We found a hole in Kayode’s armor that we hadn’t previously seen on *ShoBox* which is his inability to hit a mover,” Farhood said. “The fact that Lateef was so ineffective in a small ring punches holes in the idea that he is ready for a world title fight.”

Iannuzzi, who was fighting outside of Florida for the first time as a professional, believed he had the right game plan but could have executed it a little more effectively.

“I fought as hard as I needed to, but I could have done a little better,” Iannuzzi said. “You can’t stand in front of a big puncher. I could take some of his shots. I’m tough; I’m the first to guy to go the distance with him in a long time. I’m a true cruiserweight – that guy is a heavyweight. Not many people thought I could get past five with him.”

While both Franco and Kayode were both somewhat disappointed in their performances and may not be as close to a world title shot as they thought they were entering Friday’s bouts, Farhood believes the tough tests should be learning experiences.

“Both Franco and Kayode needed to take a step back before they take two steps forward,” Farhood said. “They are fortunate to remain unbeaten in fights where lessons were learned.”

Friday’s fights will be available On Demand beginning Monday, Feb. 7 and ending Sunday, Feb. 20.

Bernardo Osuna called the *ShoBox* action from ringside with **Steve Farhood** and **Antonio Tarver** servi

ng as expert analysts.

Gordon Hall

was the executive producer of

ShoBox

with

Richard Gaughan

producing and

Rick Phillips

directing.

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Radam G says:

Kayode is terrible. He needs a lot of work. And he needs to quit believing that he is good when he is not. Coach Ready Freddie should put him into a sparring showdown with James "Lights Out" Toney or perhaps Steve Cunningham or even Glen "The Road Warrior" Johnson. They'd immediately show Kayode how green and terrible he is. Dude has a tude in the corner. He's so arrogant that he is shock at the cornermen for telling him that he is losing the fight. Holla!

brownsugar says:

I didn't get to the fight until the 8th round of the Kayode fight. I had him winning all of the last rounds, not big,...but he was making the fight, taking the risk, and forcing he action. his opponent was crafty and confident, tried every trick in the book but his execution was suspect and overall boxing productivity was weak at best. he was clearly in survival mode. When one guy comes to survive and not win it can make anybody look bad. I thought the commentary was extremely critical of Kayode (what does biting one's bottom lip have anything to do with how he fights??). Kayode clearly got a little frustrated at times... and threw some wild punches at other times but this is what a young prospect needs... a crafty spoiler to stink up the show and take him the distance. somebody who could throw egg on his face and pour some tabasco sause in his morning coffee....this was an interim test that Kayode passed with flying colors. A Champion isn't created overnight and Kayode still needs some tender loving seasoning. I still find him to be one of the more entertaining fighters to watch. he's aggressive and he comes to put in the work everytime. I think the cruiserweight division is becoming red hot again... what I don't understand is why there's hardly any Americans in the top ten. Cunningham can't be the only decent American cruiserweight out there.

the Roast says:

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Kayode looked good in his previous bout but last night he looked like he fell in love with his punching power. It was a close fight. I have no problem with Kayode getting the nod but it was closer than the judges had it. The main event was good. They went back and forth. It was a boxer with long amatuer history vs crude heavy handed kid from the streets. The connected fighter always gets the close ones. We now how it goes. I love Shobox.