

## Joel Casamayor and Michael Grant Score Wins In Vegas...AVILA

Written by David A. Avila  
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LAS VEGAS-Cuba's Joel Casamayor built an early lead and fended off Miguel Leyva's late attack to win by split decision in a welterweight contest and Michael Grant won the match between former basketball heavyweights on Friday at Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino. Casamayor's reputation seemed to intimidate Mexico's Leyva who allowed the Cuban to dictate the first two rounds. Overhand lefts from the southpaw Casamayor kept Leyva at bay as the Mexican boxer from Ensenada, Mexico circled and circled from a distance.

Leyva used a stiff jab and some overhand lefts to begin his counter attack. Casamayor had dictated the fight the first two rounds but now the Mexican fighter began finding the range for his punches and a new plan of attack.

Casamayor altered his focus in the fifth and began to attack the body. A right hook drifted to Leyva's cup and the Mexican needed time to recover. Another right hook sent Leyva to the floor for a knockdown. He beat the count.

The Cuban master boxer seemed more relaxed in the sixth as he set up Leyva with a constant barrage of body shots. All the while he was looking to land the bomb to the head. Casamayor landed a right hook but then ate a left hand counter. A four punch combo from the Cuban fighter punctuated the round as he began to take over the fight.

Leyva tried to increase his attack but Casamayor had an answer for every offensive attempt by the Mexican in the seventh and eighth. For every left hand Leyva landed two connected for Casamayor.

The Mexican boxer needed a knockout and began moving forward for the first time in the fight in the ninth round. It paid off as he cornered Casamayor and attacked the body and head. The Cuban boxer looked like it took something out of him and began hitting low and using his head as a battering ram.

Leyva chased Casamayor around the ring in the last round. Several lead lefts connected as did a right uppercut. Casamayor retaliated with head butts several times forcing referee Vic Drakulich to issue two warnings. Leyva chased and chased but couldn't score the needed knockout.

Casamayor was given the win by split decision. One judge Lisa Giampa scored it 95-94 for Leyva but the other two scored it 97-92 and 96-93 for Casamayor.

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In a bout between literal heavyweight giants Grant knocked out Tye Fields with a sizzling counter right hand in the third round.

Fields chased Grant in the first round as the Canadian scored primarily with right jabs to the body. A stiff counter right in the second prompted Fields to seek refuge. That lasted about 30 seconds until a counter left snapped Grant's head back.

Grant had looked to use the counter right the first two rounds and finally found the perfect moment as he floored Fields with the punch. The giant Canadian tried to get up but was unable to get to his feet. Referee Joe Cortez ended the fight at 1:06 of round three.

"I knew I would catch up to him because of my speed. He wasn't going to be able to protect himself," said Grant after the win. "I sparred him before and knew I could take care of business."

### Other bouts

Las Vegas cruiserweight Aaron Williams (22-3-1, 14 KOs) scored two knockdowns in the first round to win the vacant WBC USNBC cruiserweight title against Kentucky's Shane Steele (7-4). Their first exchange saw Williams connect with a solid right that saw Steele slowly sink to his knees for the first knockdown. Steele beat the count but Williams attacked the body and head relentlessly. Referee Joe Cortez jumped in to stop the fight at 2:27 of the first round.

"I caught him coming in," said Williams, who feels he now deserves top tier talent. "Line them up and I'll knock them down."

Alvaro Morales (6-8-6) upset former Romanian Olympian Razvan Kozanu's pro debut with a taste of professional style heavyweight boxing. Morales used his slips and counters to befuddle Kozanu who had a six inch height advantage but couldn't keep Morales away. Counter rights and plenty of body punches scored for the Mexican transplant who won by majority decision.

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