

Antonio Tarver Retains IBO Title With Draw Against Kayode, Santa Cruz Wins IBF Title

Written by David A. Avila
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CARSON, CALIF.-One of the older guys looked still ready for prime time as Antonio Tarver retained the IBO cruiserweight title with a split-draw against challenger Lateef “Power” Kayode by rallying in the second half of the fight on Saturday, but old warrior Winky Wright couldn't keep pace in his fight and lost.

More than 4,000 fans at the Home Depot Center saw Tarver lose most of the first six rounds

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then mount a counter-attack behind some lethal left hands that wobbled Kayode several times. It took Tarver about five rounds to kick into gear but when he did it became a very entertaining fight for the television analyst/prizefighter.

There were no knockdowns but Tarver nearly dropped Kayode in round seven and round nine. Kayode displayed a very sturdy chin in remaining on his feet and had more energy throughout the fight. After 12 rounds the judge Max DeLuca scored 115-113 for Tarver, judge David Denkin 115-113 for Kayode and Dave Moretti 114-114 for a draw.

Tarver and Kayode were not pleased.

“I beat this guy in every aspect, I dictated every round. I hit him with clean shots every round. He was sloppy just like I said he was,” said Tarver. “I whipped him after the sixth round. I was slow to start that's all he had on me. He swung and missed all night long... never had a draw before so this is a blemish on my career.”

Kayode felt he was the definite winner and that the judges favored Tarver due to his television affiliation with Showtime.

“Everybody knows I won this fight. I'm a strong man. I came to fight. Power is my name and I did my job. I'm better than him,” said Kayode. “He won because he works for Showtime. Let's go to HBO or to my country and see how it turns out.”

Quillen-Wright

Fans cheered former world champion Winky Wright for his brave performance but it wasn't enough against Peter “Kid Chocolate” Quillin (27-0, 20 KOs) who knocked down the boxing great from Florida and won easily by unanimous decision after 10 rounds. All three judges scored it for Quillin 97-92 and 98-91 twice.

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“He definitely won the fight,” said Wright, 40. “My timing was off.”

Wright (51-6-1, 25 KOs) tried mightily to match the young firecracker, but he couldn't muster the speed or the stamina of the young Cuban-American who floored the older fighter with a well-place right hand in round five. He also nearly floored Wright in round eight with a sneaky right uppercut that had the veteran reeling. The crowd cheered Wright but couldn't fight for him in the ring.

“I give all the credit in the world to Winky. I threw a lot of punches and made him fight me,” said Quillen, 28. “This time we went to Pluto, maybe next time we go to Jupiter.”

Santa Cruz-Malinga

Leo Santa Cruz, 23, ripped through South Africa's Vusi Malinga (20-4, 12 KOs) to win the vacant IBF bantamweight world title by unanimous decision. It was an impressive exhibition of a tight defense and non-stop precision punches. Especially to the body.

Malinga absorbed every head shot fired at him but the blows to the body delivered by Santa Cruz with a resounding echo proved the difference. In rounds seven and eight the fighter from East L.A. landed punishing blows that buckled Malinga's knees.

“I dedicate this title to my dad, he always wanted to have a world champion son,” said Santa Cruz (20-0-1, 11 KOs). All three judges scored in favor of Santa Cruz 120-108 twice and 119-109.

Trout-Rodriguez

WBA junior middleweight titleholder Austin “No Doubt” Trout (2-0, 14 KOs) retained the title by unanimous decision over slick Delvin Rodriguez (26-6-3, 14 KOs) after 12 rounds of feints and counters. It wasn't until the final round that both unloaded menacing punches. Southpaw Trout

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convinced the judges with a slightly more active style.

Rodriguez acknowledged he could have done more.

“He had real quick feet. I tried to put combos together but everytime I did he was already at it,” Rodriguez. “Maybe I should have gone to the body more than the head. I didn't hurt him enough to get the decision.”

The judges scored it 120-108, 118-110, 117-111 for Trout.

“I don't think it was my best performance but I got the W,” said Trout.

Bika-Davis

Australia's Sakio Bika (30-5-2, 21 KOs) relentlessly battered Florida's Dyah Davis (21-3-1, 9 KOs) for nine rounds before finally stopping him at 1:40 of round 10. Davis was simply overwhelmed but showed a sturdy chin before succumbing to Bika's onslaught in a super middleweight match.

In another match undefeated Omar Figueroa (17-0-1, 14 KOs) knocked out Tyler Ziolkowski (14-16, 8 KOs) in round one of their junior welterweight contest.

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