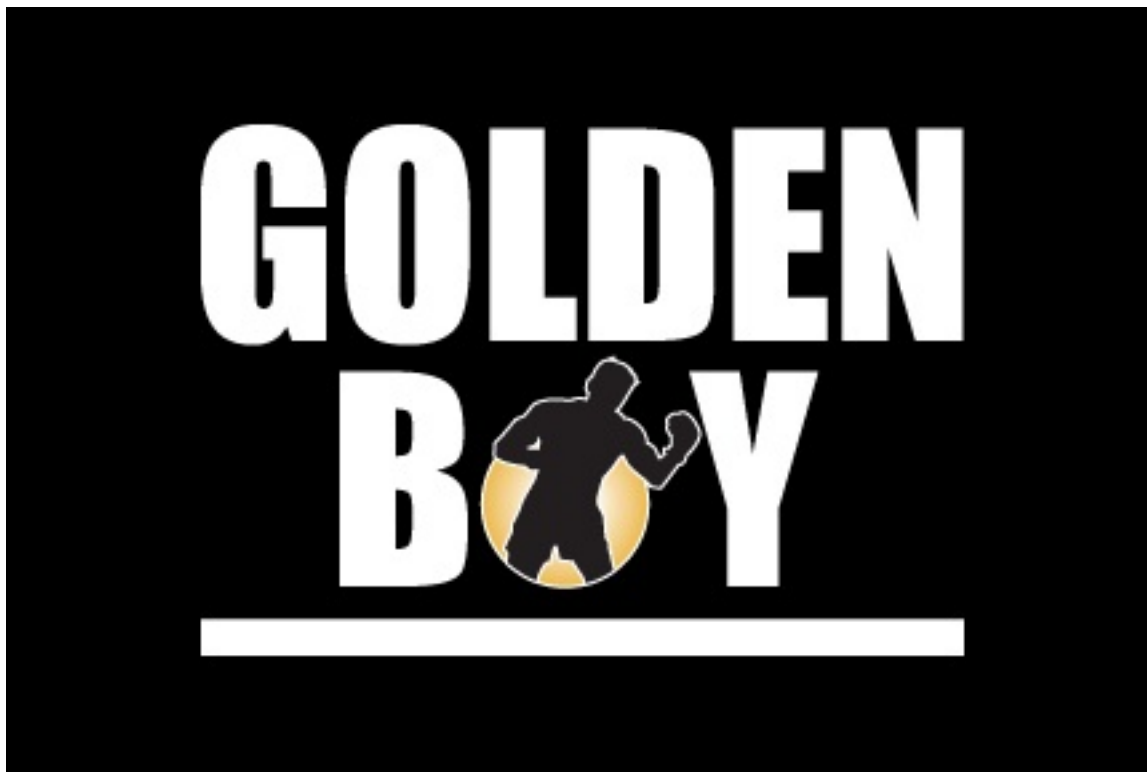


Frankie "Pitbull" Gomez KOs Manuel Leyva in Anaheim

Written by David A. Avila

Sunday, 04 November 2012 10:30



ANAHEIM-It may have been Orange County but the fight card had a distinct East L.A. flavor as Frankie Gomez returned to the ring to win by knockout after almost a year's absence on Saturday.

Gomez (13-0, 10 KOs) didn't waste much time before a mostly pro East L.A. crowd that ventured more than 40 miles to the Phoenix Club Arena near Angel Stadium and the Honda Center. The more than 800 fans were not disappointed by the Golden Boy Promotions fight card.

The fighter known as "the Pitbull" used a round to get his bearings before he unloaded the trademark Frankie Gomez right hand bombs on Manuel Leyva (21-9). It didn't take long before the East L.A. prizefighter began to connect.

In round three Gomez three overhand right bombs and down went Long Beach's Leyva. He beat the count and was delivered on the canvas once again by a right hand bomb. Again he got up but a left uppercut and right hand chin buster sent Leyva down for good at 1:15 of round three for a knockout.

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"I wanted to fight more rounds but I'll take it," said Gomez, who is now trained by Freddie Roach.

Roach's other fighter, Jamie Kavanagh (12-0-1, 5 KOs), was matched against Gomez's former stable mate Ramon Valadez (11-3, 6 KOs) of East L.A., now fighting out of Big Bear Lake. Those who know boxing expected this to be the most entertaining match up and they were not wrong.

Both Kavanagh and Valadez had their moments in the fight. It was the East L.A. fighter who connected big in round one, but the Irish fighter withstood the ding.

Kavanagh, who speaks Spanish fluently, used his jab and footwork to keep Valadez from loading up again. Slowly he began finding a place for his right hand to open up a slight lead.

Valadez began opening up with some bombs but left himself open for big counters and Kavanagh took advantage. A solid combination had Valadez nearly on the deck but somehow he survived. The Irish fighter poured on the combos but Valadez escaped and ended the round with some solid shots of his own.

Round four saw Kavanagh try to land the big shot with some combinations but Valadez fired back and landed his own three-punch combination. Fans were delirious.

Slowly Kavanagh turned the fight in his favor with left hooks that Valadez just couldn't escape. Those left hooks kept slipping past Valadez's lowered right hand guard time after time.

In the final round both seemed spent and unable to continue the furious pace. Each fighter landed a solid blow but neither was able to drop the other though both came very close.

All three judges scored the fight for Kavanagh 80-72, 79-71, 78-74.

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Though Valadez lost the battle, once again he proved to be one of the most exciting fighters of 2012. He’s never in a boring fight.

Other bouts

Junior featherweight Joet Gonzalez (2-0) knocked out Victor Serrano (0-4) at 1:47 of round one.

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