

Stern View: FOX Sports 1 Ringside Report

Written by Joel Stern

Wednesday, 30 October 2013 16:15



On Monday, October 28, FOX Sports 1 showed card from Redwood City, Ca. presented by Golden Boy Promotions, Don Chargin Productions and Paco Presents. The televised portion of the card featured local headliners, the superbantamweight Manuel 'Tino' Avila and middleweight Paul 'El Gallo Negro' Mendez, who hoped to take the rare opportunity of boxing on national television to springboard their careers to the next level. While neither fighter lost, a spider bite and a game opponent, respectively, prevented each fighter from showcasing their talents as desired.

The event took place in the back of a massive steel building called the Sport House. Indoor soccer, lacrosse, and basketball were all being played by youth and adults like any other night. One would never know what was taking place behind the double doors at the back. Behind those doors was a lively and youthful boxing crowd filling the room to near capacity. Energized by the combination of spectators personally knowing the participants, the T.V. lights and cameras, ring card girls acting as ushers and the presence of some professional boxing royalty including Amir Khan and Floyd Mayweather, Sr., the room was transformed into an event.

The main event featured super bantamweight Manuel 'Tino' Avila, 13(5)-0, of Fairfield, Ca. against late substitute Jose Angel Cota, 8-9-1, of Mexicali, Mexico. Cota has never won in multiple attempts in the U.S. Nagging injuries and lack of opponents have slowed Avila's recent development. This night Avila was supposed to face Jose Silveira of Mexico, a veteran of 10 round fights against quality opposition. Alas, Silveira had to pull out of the fight on late notice, victim of a vicious spider bite.

In 2012, Avila showed he was making the transition from the amateurs to the professionals, sitting down on his punches more, going for the finish when presented and shooting the jab hard. When he is on, Avila is on, with quick reflexes, counter punching in combination off of the cross or the left hook and that sharp jab. Cota didn't provide Avila much of a chance to showcase these skills as Cota was bloodied early and disposed of in the 2nd after failing to respond to a fifty plus punch combination. Signed by Golden Boy at 17 and managed by Cameron Dunkin, Avila is in good hands and will surely be afforded the opportunity to reveal to the boxing public at large what he can truly do against a real test.

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After Salinas, Ca. based middleweight Paul Mendez's draw to Louis Rose in the co-main event, Mendez' dream of being a top ten ranked middleweight will now have to take a longer and more difficult path. Mendez, 14-2-2, entered the ring dressed in crisp white and with a focused demeanor hoping to build on a seven fight win streak. Louis 'The Unknown' Rose of Lynwood, Ca. entered the ring with trunks half bearing the flag of the U.S. and the other half the flag of Greece, to honor his Greek-American trainer who has taken him in after an unstable childhood. Relaxed and smiling, Rose looking more like an honor student about to embark on a trip to the model United Nations than a boxer in a ten round fight on national television. But, Rose is used to traveling to towns not his own to face the prospect he isn't supposed to beat.

The 1st round saw both men looking, feinting for openings and trying to establish range with the jab. Despite taking a Mendez 1-2, Rose won the round by being busier and with a hard hook to Mendez' body in the last 30 seconds. Mendez bounced back in the 2nd, finding his cross from shorter range and slipping and ducking Rose's 1-2. But, Rose was able to work his way inside without much difficulty, a problem that would haunt Mendez for the remainder of the fight. In the 3rd, Rose invested heavily to the body, pounding with hooks and uppercuts. This continued in the 4th, though Mendez found some success with his rear uppercut.

One got the sense that this was to be Rose's fight. Members of The Money Team kept excitedly telling Floyd Mayweather Sr. that they got to bring this guy to their gym. Mendez' trainers, Max Garcia and Dean Familton, who normally shout out technical instructions of what punches to throw at what ranges, were reduced to shouting out "be first" and "c'mon Paul". They were no longer controlling the rounds, the rounds were happening to them.

The 5th through 7th, saw Rose tiring and Mendez landing the harder shots, though neither fighter could find the openings to land clean. Mendez often found himself smothered and unable to take advantage of his 76 inch reach, but his uppercuts and short rights were the best punches of the rounds.

In the 8th, Rose hurt Mendez with a right hook-left hook combination followed by a cross and another set of hooks. Mendez looked to be done, but stormed with a flurry of his own driving Rose to the ropes. The fight finished in a phone booth, with Rose outworking and landing the harder shots punctuated by a clean left hook to Mendez' chin at the bell.

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Neither fighter celebrated at the bell, the exhausted Rose slumped over the ropes and Mendez appeared pushed to the limit. Mendez' corner looked stunned and saddened, this was not the showing they were looking for regardless of what the forthcoming decision would bear. When the split draw was announced, neither side got the desired result. In contemporary boxing, winning is generally what is remembered, and as the drained fighters tried to exit the ring, their path was blocked by the throng of fans focused on taking pictures with Floyd Mayweather Sr., as the fighters were already an afterthought.

In other action, San Francisco's junior welterweight Jonathan Chicas, 11(4)-1, defeated Joaquin Chavez, 6(2)-11-2, of Los Angeles via 6 round unanimous decision. Chicas put in good work during the first three rounds, landing hard hooks set up from a crisp jab. Chicas seems to have learned from his only defeat and no longer rushes in off balance. The last half of the fight found Chicas slowing down and Chavez able to pick off the jab preventing Chicas from landing his follow up. But, Chavez had little answer of his own.

San Jose, Ca., lightweight Andy Vences, 5(2)-0, looked far sharper than his last outing, cruising to a four round unanimous decision over Jose Garcia, 3(2)-7-1. Vences played matador to Garcia's bull, using his jab, pivots, slips and rolls to finish the last three rounds virtually untouched.

Backed by about 100 followers San Leandro's Benjamin Briceno, 3-1, received an undeserved decision over junior featherweight Mario Ayala, 2-2, of Sacramento. Ayala out boxed and marked up Briceno. But, Ayala, who recently lost to an inferior fighter who out busied him, had to experience the life of an opponent. A role he may now have to repeat.

Hometown fighter Jesus Sandoval, 3-1-3, and Sammy Perez, 1-2-3, of Ohio, fought to a majority draw.

Salinas based junior welterweight Darwin Price, 3(2), outclassed Omar Avelar, 2-10, in every way causing the ref to halt the fight in the 2nd, not because Avelar was in any specific danger, but there just wasn't any point in continuing.

In the opening bout, cruiserweight Andrew Tabiti, 3(3)-0, of Las Vegas faced opponent Eric Slocum. Tabiti, trained by Floyd Mayweather, Sr. and walked to the ring by a single Watson

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twin, looked cut from ebony with a back as wide as the ring and appears ready to conquer the boxing world. Slocum, with his three day stubble and grey gut, looked like he just conquered GTA on Xbox. Tabiti knocked down Eric 'The Underdog' Slocum three times in the first 1:30 causing a simultaneous ref stoppage. corner towel throwing.

With the fights over and the gym that housed them emptying, small groups of people filled the lobby of the Sports House surrounding the now dressed boxers who they knew and came to see. Oblivious to the over forty indoor soccer league taking place on the other side of the plexy glass, family, friends, girlfriends, the boxer's boyz from school each waited patiently to hug, take a picture, shake hands or just acknowledge the boxer for doing something very few people can do. The boxers graciously accepted it all like men on their wedding day, only with black eyes and facial contusions. While most of these boxers will never fulfill their boxing dreams, these moments, as well as the moments they shared with the another fighter in the ring, will remain, forever, real.

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