Wilmer Vasquez said it was just another fight. Perhaps. And perhaps he will be just another heavyweight.

At the moment, however, it would be difficult to find anyone who shares that opinion.

Vasquez, from Miami, via Venezuela, arrived in Huntington, Long Island on Friday night to embark on a career in the professional prize ring. His debut lasted all of one minute and 40 seconds.

That's how long it took Vasquez to dismantle Drexie James. Before you roll your eyes and think that you've seen this before, think again. Indeed, many a prospect is fed a sacrificial pug for his debut. Not so here.

Although inactive since August of 2004, Drexie James stepped into the Long Island ring with 15 pro fights. His record was 8-7 (4 KOs) and much of the competition had been stiff. He had been stopped by Malik Scott, Eliseo Castillo and Dominick Guinn. But in 2001, he knocked out U.S. Olympian Michael Bennett in the first round.

That was enough to make the card's promoter Bob Duffy nervous. Prior to the opening bell, Duffy sat in the press section and said. "This fight scares me."

It didn't scare Vasquez. The former Olympian entered the ring calm and composed. He wasn't anxious nor was he reckless in his approach. He fought as if the heavyweight championship of the world was his birthright. This is a man who believes in himself. Or more precisely, in his left hook.

There were a few awkward moments as the heavyweights felt each other out for a minute or so and then -- BOOM -- Welcome to pro boxing! James drove a stiff right hand to the jaw of Vasquez.

Nothing. Nada. Zip.

The fight didn't last much longer. Vasquez waded in and ripped a left hook that felled James in a neutral corner. The fighter made it to his feet, but not for long. Vasquez stepped forward and snapped a brutally efficient, thudding combination and James fell again. This time referee Wayne Kelly stopped the fight without a count.

Randy Gordon, a longtime boxing observer serving in the capacity of ring announcer on this night, turned and mouthed a single word: "Wow."

When Vasquez arrived back in his dressing room, several of his handlers were arguing over who was going to keep the gloves from his pro debut. They all think this kid has a future and

now they are not alone with such thoughts.

“It feels like just another fight,” said Vasquez. “I understand that it is my pro debut, but to me, it’s just another fight.”

Confidence is not something that Vasquez lacks. He is being promoted by DRL -- Dan Wise, Roberto Duran and Luis DeCubas and is managed by Luis DeCubas Jr. The fighter was asked if he was concerned about his opponent’s experience.

DeCubas, standing off to the side, chuckled. “He didn’t even know the guy’s name.”

When the question was translated into Spanish, the fighter smiled. “I didn’t know anything about him. I’m not afraid of anyone. I’m not even afraid of the devil.”

Vasquez, a tall and thickly muscled heavyweight, represented Venezuela at the 2004 Olympics in Athens, Greece. He reached the quarterfinals before losing a 24-4 decision to Cuba ’s Odlanier Solis, the eventual Gold medal winner in the heavyweight division.

“Bring him over from Cuba on a raft,” said Vasquez. “There is no running, no tapping here. This is professional boxing. I understand that he’s a great amateur but this is a different game. Bring him here, I want a piece of him. He’ll fall worse than this one.”

Little is known about Vasquez and DeCubas Jr. described him as a boxer-puncher who can box like Muhammad Ali. He paused a second and added, “But tonight was more like a Sonny Liston night.”

Vasquez does have a Liston-type physique but he is far more approachable than the sullen former champion. Unless, of course, you are wearing trunks and gloves. It was that flash of power, though, that got DeCubas interested in the Venezuelan fighter. He’ll return to the ring on January 26th on an ESPN card from Mohegan Sun.

Vasquez already understands the importance of having guys like Duran and DeCubas in his corner.

“I’m with the cream of the crop,” said Vasquez. “I can’t feel any bigger. I feel like a king.”

On this night, he looked like a king. A future king.