Two things became obvious in the second round. The first was that Tommy Rainone was going to win this fight. The second was, that he'd do it with one hand.

Rainone had injured his hand but the good thing was, it was his right hand. When you are a southpaw, an injury to the right mitt is preferable.

But the bad thing was, it was the right hand, the hand with which one uses to shake another person's hand. And after Rainone's second pro win, a lot of people wanted to shake his hand.

"I don't think anything feels as good as winning your first," said Rainone. "But this definitely feels good, especially since I had to overcome a hand injury."

On December 8, at the Huntington Townhouse, on Long Island, Rainone (1-0) engaged in his second professional prizefight. It was a four-round welterweight affair against Jesse Gomez (1-2). As is his custom, Rainone saw to it that the action was spirited. But, as is the custom when any southpaw fights an orthodox fighter, the action was at times muffled. The first round was three minutes of feeling each other out, each man trying to figure out the best way to penetrate the other's defense.

That changed in the second round. Rainone buckled Gomez's knees with a straight left hand in the center of the ring. A few moments later, Rainone dropped him with a multi-punch combination.

The fight was decided then and there. Unfortunately, so too was Rainone's immediate future. He had injured his right hand and any hope of coming right back and fighting again the follow week was gone. Rainone signaled to his corner that he had hurt his hand. He also sent the message to the Long Island faithful who follow him by holding up his gloved fist between rounds and shaking his had in the direction of some of his fans.

But there was still a fight to win here, which Rainone did. All three judges scored it 40-35 for Rainone. Although the right hand was damaged, he did plenty with the left, hurting Gomez several more times.

"I would have knocked him out but I couldn't even jab," said Rainone. "When I hurt him, I couldn't follow it up. I popped him with a right jab on the forehead and I felt the knuckle move again. It was hurting me more to throw it."

Back in the dressing room, he gingerly unraveled his bandages to reveal a swollen middle knuckle – the striking knuckle as the doctor would call it. He tried shaking hands with a few well-wishers, but awkwardly offered his left hand with a backhand type of grip. Everyone got the message.

"Next week is off," he said, referring to his plan of fighting twice in one week. He was already booked on a card for Dec. 15 but would now have to give the promoter the bad news. But, first things first.

A New York State Athletic Commission doctor approached and said, "I promised your mother we'd tape up your hand so you wouldn't hurt it any more tonight."

So, once again, Rainone went through the process of getting his right hand taped. This time, it was for preservation, not destruction. The doctor also issued him insurance papers to take to the hospital so the hand could be x-rayed. Rainone tucked them away in his gym bag.

"I'll go tomorrow," he said. "If I go now, I'll end up sitting in the emergency room all night."

"Besides,' he added, "Who is in a rush to find out bad news?"

The news wasn't terrible. Rainone went to North Shore University Hospital in Syosset, Long Island the next day and the x-ray revealed a lot of broken blood vessels surrounding the third knuckle. There was no fracture. He was ordered not to hit anything for two weeks. That's a tough one to adhere to if you are a boxer, but at least Rainone can enjoy the holidays without trading punches with anyone.

Rainone plans on fighting again in late January at The Tropicana in Atlantic City and perhaps in early February in Philadelphia. With a doctor-ordered ban on striking anyone or anything, he plans on doing his daily roadwork as well as other cardio-vascular workouts.

That workload should be just right for the holidays. This will mark the first Christmas in 10 years – since he was 16 years old – that Rainone will wake up Christmas morning in the same home as his mother and brothers. That, even more than 2-0, is cause for celebration.

"A lot of time will be spent in our new home," said Rainone. "Gifts will be exchanged there with my mother and three brothers. Spending time with my family is very important to me."

And his New Year's resolution?

"To have a break through year, not just in boxing but in life."

He's 2-0. His family has come together again. It seems like he's already on the way to achieving that resolution.