

Caballero Blows Out Molitor

Written by Michael Woods

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Casino Rama in Ontario, Canada had been a good luck charm for Canadian Steve Molitor. The IBF 122 pound champion had defended his belt five straight times there, but the charm wore off on Friday evening, in disastrously conclusive fashion. Panama's Celestino Caballero owned Molitor from minute one of their ShoBox encounter, and finished the job in the fourth round of a junior featherweight consolidation fight.

Caballero scored a knockdown early in the fourth with a right uppercut, and went back to work, backing Molitor into the ropes. He ripped off four solid smacks, and Larouche saw enough, as did the ref, who stepped in at 52 seconds elapsed. This showing kicks Caballero up two notches, and gives him major bargaining power moving forward. He's an aggressive banger, who looks to close, and TSS will be watching him more closely moving forward.

The fight was scheduled for 12 rounds to consolidate the WBA and IBF 22 pound titles. Ontario's Molitor (28-0 entering; 121.6 pounds) came in with the IBF junior featherweight crown, while the 32-year-old Caballero (30-2 entering; 121.6 pounds), coming in with a 6-0 record in title bouts, had the WBA's version. The winner would find himself a step closer to a bigger money matchup, as the celebrated Israel Vazquez holds the WBC's 122 pound belt, and young stud Juan Manuel Lopez has the WBO version.

The 28-year-old Molitor was in backward mode early. Cab is muuuch more of a seek and destroy type. 21 of his wins had been stoppages, and he'd curtailed his last three foes before the final bell. The Canuck lefty had a hard time with the freakishly tall (5-11) Panamanian, who bounces, and jukes as he looks for an opening for his whacks. Molitor got in the odd left, but it looked early like his Rama win streak would be halted. "This is not Steve Molitor here tonight, this is not you," his corner told him after the third.

Cab yapped at Molitor, urging him to trade. The Panamanian scored that knockdown early in the fourth, off a right uppercut. He was up, on unsteady legs. Caught on the ropes, Cab started to finish, but it was Molitor trainer Stephan LaRouche who ended it, as he came up on the apron to wave the white flag. "He was the better man tonight," the loser said. He admitted he felt tight going in to the bout, and was bothered by the winner's reach. "He was slow like we expected," Molitor said, but Caballero didn't look that way to TSS.

Cab said that "Molitor is not a warrior," but is a "fine champion." There is a difference in his world. We think we know what he means...

Cab called out out Vazquez and Lopez after the bout. Cab and Vazquez are both, incidentally, promoted by Sycuan Promotions.