

Jhonny Gonzalez KO's Colombia's Reynaldo Lopez

Written by David A. Avila

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CABAZON, CA.-Two big punchers stepped in the ring but it was Mexico's Jhonny Gonzalez who emerged with the victory after all the shrapnel had subsided with Colombia's Reynaldo Lopez on Friday.

Golden Boy Promotion's last show at Morongo Casino featured former bantamweight titleholder Gonzalez back in the ring against Lopez (30-6-2, 21 KOs) who was coming off two victories including a surprise first round stoppage of Mike Oliver several months back.

Both guys can hit.

Lopez, a southpaw, doesn't lose very often and the guys that can beat him are usually world championship quality. Mexico City's Gonzalez fits that bill.

After a tentative probing round a clash of heads sparked Gonzalez to go into another gear. When he returned to his corner a fiery look in his eye showed he was not going to be absorbing any more head butts.

Gonzalez attacked Lopez as if a crime had been committed against his family-many were in attendance. The tall lanky bantamweight pinned the Colombian on the ropes and fired a barrage of punches with a left hook to the jaw dropping him to the floor. He beat the count. But Lopez survived and actually caught Gonzalez with a left before the end of the round.

"I felt a little tight because he's a southpaw," said Gonzalez (40-6, 34 KOs). "He gave me some problems after I dropped him. He connected with a good shot. He moved me. But that helped me."

The next round Gonzalez emerged with a knockout on his mind and the knockout came with a three-punch combination that dropped Lopez for the count at 2:17 of the fourth round.

"He's a very strong kid," said Lopez who has three losses to former world champions. "I thought it would be easier. That's why he's a world champion."

Gonzalez said he's targeting a world title fight and hopes it comes early next year. Talks with representatives of Israel Vazquez have not been good, but interest in Japan's world champion are underway.

"Honestly this fight helped me a lot," Gonzalez said.

Rocha wins

Last minute replacement Oscar "Pajarito" Andrade (36-35, 18 KOs) tried his best but Montebello's Nestor Rocha (21-1, 7 KOs) powered through without mercy in a bantamweight

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contest.

From the first round Rocha used stifling body blows and power shots against Durango, Mexico's Andrade. A triple uppercut landed on Andrade's chin in the first round to let him know what he was facing. It didn't get any easier the rest of the fight.

Rocha used the same method of attack for all 10 rounds as Andrade used his experience to survive the relentless body attack. All three judges scored it 100-90 for Rocha.

Vampiro

Mexico's Luis "Vampiro" Arceo (21-8-2, 14 KOs) finally captured his first win in California and handed Carson's Demetrio Soto (5-1, 4 KOs) his first pro defeat in a bruising welterweight bout. Both fighters had the same pressure style and refused to back up.

Arceo, a former Mexican Olympian, had ventured twice to California to meet outstanding lightweight prospects Josesito Lopez of Riverside and Dominic Salcido of Rialto, but both proved too fast, too elusive and basically had the style to beat him. Because his fight was scrapped last week, when the promoters called him to see if he was interested in fighting an undefeated junior welterweight prospect. He eagerly accepted because he was ready. And one more thing, Soto likes to stand right and front and trade.

For six rounds both never moved more than two feet away from each other and wailed away like windmills. Soto proved he could take as good as he could punch, but Arceo was better at evading punches and countering with precision.

By the fourth round Soto's face was swollen and red with blood streaming down his face. But he continued to load up on the Tijuana fighter until the final bell. Neither fighter took a rest.

In the end it was Arceo's experience that proved the difference to the judges. Fritz Werner scored it 57-57, but judges Marty Denkin 59-55 and Alex Rochin 58-56 favored Arceo for a majority decision.

Ashanti

In a heavyweight bout, Ashanti Jordan (7-0, 6 KOs) of San Francisco scored a second round technical knockout over San Diego's Lawson Baker (5-5-1). A cut over the eye of Lawson forced referee David Mendoza to halt the fight at 2:13 of the round.

Huerta KOs Mendoza

Rising prospect Charles Huerta (8-0, 5 KOs) needed eight rounds to finally stop Mexico's veteran boxer Trinidad Mendoza (22-17-2, 17 KOs) in a featherweight match.

"I wanted to take my time. He was very good," said Huerta who has only fought professionally for one year while Mendoza has more than 50 pro fights including against some of the best

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featherweights in the world such as Jhonny Gonzalez, Danny Romero and Daniel Ponce De Leon. "In the third round he caught me good."

After six calculating rounds, Huerta unloaded a flurry that dropped Mendoza. The veteran beat the count and survived the round.

But in the last round, a counter right hand caught Mendoza for a knockdown. He survived that but was pummeled with a nonstop barrage and dropped again. Referee David Mendoza stopped the fight at 2:46 of the round.

"I took my time," said Huerta.