

Cherry & Santa Cruz Win At Commerce Casino

Written by David A. Avila

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COMMERCE, CALIF.-Former world title contender Edner Cherry powered through Jovan Jones with ease in a lightweight contest and local hero Leo Santa Cruz scored a knockout win at the Commerce Casino on Thursday.

Cherry (21-6-2, 13 KOs) hadn't fought in more than a year since losing by decision to Timothy Bradley. He took it out on Jones (9-8) for three one-sided rounds as he pounded and pounded on the seemingly much smaller fighter.

A double left hook in the first round blasted Jones to the ground to start the contest. In the second round it wasn't much better for Jones who ate a right hand and was knocked down again. The third and final round saw Cherry deliver more than six thunderous body shots that collapsed Jones in a neutral corner. Referee Ray Corona stopped the fight at 1:14 of the third round.

"I've been off for a year," said Cherry who had fought Bradley and Paul Malignaggi unsuccessfully for world titles. "I still have a little rust. This is my comeback fight."

In the co-main event, it was L.A.'s Santa Cruz (12-0, 4 KOs) who had target practice against the sturdy Juan Beltran (19-16-3) for three rounds. After constantly pounding the body, a flurry of punches with no return forced referee Lou Moret to stop the junior featherweight fight at 2:17 of the third round.

"In the gym we were (practicing) pressuring and pressuring," said Santa Cruz.

Other bouts

Sharif Bogere (13-0, 7 KOs) of Las Vegas won a unanimous decision over Mexico's super tough Cristian Favela (17-23-6, 10 KOs) in a fast paced six round lightweight contest. Bogere scored more blows but it was Favela who landed the bigger punches. In the end the referees scored it 59-55 twice and 60-54 for Bogere.

Russia's Fedor Chudinov (3-0) and Mexico's Cesar Ibarra (5-3) fought an entertaining four rounds with a right hand to the body scoring a knockdown for Chudinov. That set the trend for middleweight Chudinov who gained momentum from the knockdown and won by unanimous decision 39-36 twice and 40-35.

Florida's Joseph Elegele stopped Juan Carlos Diaz at 2:52 of the first round. It was the third knockdown that did it. A left cross dropped Diaz first, followed by a left uppercut, then a counter left hand bounced Diaz to the floor a third time.

Russia's Dmitry Chudinov (3-0) blasted Nicaragua's Flavio Cardoza (1-4) three times to the floor first with a left hook to the body, then a double left hook to the head, and last with a right

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hand feint followed quickly by a left hook that sprawled Cardoza along the ropes. Referee Corona stopped the fight at 1:46 of the first round.

Las Vegas fighter Hastings Bwayla (2-0) collided with mixed martial arts fighter Anthony McDavitt, making his pro debut as a boxer. Though Bwayla had too much speed and skill McDavitt used his strength and tenacity to keep the fight interesting. A well-timed right hand floored McDavitt (0-1) but the fight resumed. A flurry of punches by Bwayla forced referee Moret to stop the fight at 2:23 of the third round.

“He had a good chin,” said Bwayla of his MMA opponent.

Russia’s Ivan Redkach (2-0) dropped Napoleon Mathews (1-3) twice en route to a first round knockout at 2:29. A left hook body shot dropped Mathews floored the Seattle fighter, forcing referee Corona to halt the lightweight fight.

Former amateur standout Fidel Maldonado of New Mexico blitzed Oregon’s Nick Brannies (1-3) with a flurry of punches in a lightweight bout. A combination dropped Brannies for the first knockdown. That was followed by an overhand right that dropped Brannies again. Referee Lou Moret stopped the fight at 1:10 of the first round. It was Maldonado’s first win as a professional.