

## Kirkland Beats Angulo in Cancun Thriller...WOODS

Written by Michael Woods

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Trainers for the ages can pull out a disc of Alfredo Angulo in the main event which unfolded in Cancun, Mexico and ran on HBO Saturday night and tell their fighters how they should not punch themselves out when they get their foe in trouble. Angulo put James Kirkland down thirty seconds into the first, thought he could close the show, but instead used all his gas. Kirkland, who many thought was damaged goods in the chin department, summoned every ounce of his guts, stayed alive, dropped Angulo at the end of the first and came all the way back to stop Angulo in the sixth round.

Fredo (age 29; 5-10; from Mexico, living in CA; 20-1 with 17 KOs entering) was 154, 163 on fight night, while Kirkland (age 27; 5-9; from Texas; 29-1 with 26 KOs entering) was 153 1/2, and we don't know what he weighed Saturday, because his team wouldn't allow it.

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In the first, Fredo dropped Kirkland on his butt with a right thirty seconds in. It was thrown while he was backing straight back. He got up and dropped Fredo, with a left hook, with 17 seconds to go in the round, after he punched himself out. "Breathe," trainer Nacho Beristain commanded Angulo.

In the second, Kirkland came out fiery. Angulo looked weary after being knocked down for the first time as a pro or amateur.. Analyst Roy Jones had Angulo out but the Mexican got his legs back, to an extent. His body work was amazing, considering he was this close to getting stopped a minute before.

In the third, Kirkland was the busier man. Jim Lampley warmed to the idea of showing the replay of this thriller on PPV as Kirkland stayed in Angulo's grill. The Mexican's hand speed was off though he managed to speed up the launches during several flurries.

In the fourth, Kirkland was scoring with his left as Angulo, his face a mask of fatigue and waning resolve, tried to block and answer enough to stay in it.

In the fifth, Angulo looked like he was weighed down by lead underwear. Kirkland threw nasty left uppercuts to the body and one wondered how long Angulo could go on. Max Kellerman said no one watching would ever forget this night before the end of the round.

In round six, Angulo was trapped on the ropes, and the ref stepped in, for a TKO.

Kirkland after to Kellerman said for this fight he trained like a maniac, as opposed to his training for his April clash against Nobuhiro Ishida, a fight in which he got stopped. Angulo left the ring without talking to HBO. Lampley after called Kirkland "a force of nature" and "extraordinary."

--Peter Quillin, aka Kid Chocolate, stopped Craig McEwan with a power punch combo in the sixth round, as the ref stepped in and halted the fight, which displeased McEwan greatly in the TV opener on HBO Saturday night.

The HBO crew, Jim Lampley, Roy Jones and Max Kellerman, debated the stop, wondering if it was premature. To me, it looked like the lefty McEwan ate three real hard, clean shots and had a blank look on his face when the ref stopped it. I was fine with it. Always, always, always better to early than too late.

McEwan's right eye was puffed and it looked like Quillin was the better man; but Mac really hated the ending. He tried to convince the HBO crew that he was good to go.

Quillin, age 28, went to 26-0 while the 29-year-old Scotsman dropped to 19-1 in the scrap which unfolded before the Alfredo Angulo-James Kirjkland main event from Centro de Cancun in Cancun, Mexico.