Written by David A. Avila
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LAS VEGAS-Despite a horrific swollen eye Riverside's Mauricio "El Maestro" Herrera handed Russia's strong Rusland Provodnikov his first loss in winning the vacant IBF North American junior welterweight title.

A very vocal crowd saw Herrera surprise Provodnikov with some clever boxing that nullified the Russian fighter's strength to win by unanimous decision at Cox Pavilion and enter his name among the junior welterweight contenders.

Herrera's movement and clever combinations kept the Russian fighter bewildered in the first two rounds. The jab was especially important in stopping Provodnikov's momentum in the early going.

At the end of the third a clash of heads left Herrera with a badly swollen left eye that nearly shut. He had sustained a left hand from Provodnikov and rallied to land a few of his own, but the eye looked bad.

After the ringside doctor looked at Herrera's eye in the sixth, the Riverside boxer stunned the Russian with some pretty combos up and down. It was his best round since the second round.

Provodnikov stormed back in the eighth round with several strong right hands that connected flush. Herrera took the blows but couldn't sustain a rally to win the round. From there on the two tried to impose their styles on each other with Herrera slipping and countering and Provodnikov looking for the big blow. Both fighter's faces looked like they had beaten each other with bats.

After 12 rounds all three judges ruled it for Herrera 115-113, 116-112 twice.

Little Herrera Demetrius Andrade (12-0, 8 KOs) used his speed and reach to outscore Riverside's Alberto Herrera (7-2-1, 5 KOs) in an eight round junior middleweight fight.

Those long arms of Andrade set the tone in the first round and he attempted to open up on the Riverside fighter and was rebuffed. But the former Olympian won the round easily.

Herrera had a decent round in the third. During an exchange of punches a left hook stunned Andrade who walked into the blow. But Andrade maintained control of the round with his jabs.

Herrera did his best work in the sixth as he worked his way inside the long arms of Andrade and landed some combinations to the head and body. During several clinches Herrera refused to allow himself to be held and won the round.

Andrade won by unanimous decision 79-73 and 80-72 twice.

Other bouts Riverside's Richard Contreras (4-0) blew out Las Vegas junior featherweight Juan

Tepoz (4-5-1) with his strength and accuracy. A right hand finished Tepoz's night and he was counted out.

Oscar Andrade (4-0) of East Los Angeles won a battle of undefeated junior welterweight prospects by out-mauling Las Vegas's Deth'Marcus Hall (2-1). The first round was close but then Andrade bullied the bully and for the rest of the fight he simply punched his way to victory. All three judges scored it 40-36 for Andrade.

Jesus Gutierrez (2-0) won by unanimous decision over fellow Las Vegan Frankie Martinez (0-1) after four rounds of a junior lightweight bout. Gutierrez caught Martinez repeatedly walking into punches and won 40-36, 40-35 twice according to the judges.

Las Vegas's Lonnie Smith (12-2-2, 9 KOs) didn't need much time to unravel Washington's Jose Gomez in a junior lightweight match. A left to the liver stopped Gomez at 2:40 of the first round. Smith had dropped Gomez earlier with a right hand.

Comment on this article

Condor says:

What a great start to FNF's. This was a war.

BoxAnne says:

needs to dump Dad. The Herrera he fought was significantly smaller, and lost his last bout be KO. Andrade made too many mistakes for his level of experience, really needs a real trainer, and a real fight,

brownsugar says:

I'm very dissappointed in Andrade,.. like BoxAnne said,.. with all the amateur experience he's had,.. he should be carving a swath of wreckage thru his less pedigreed opponents like a tornado ripping thru a small Midwestern town... leaving nothing but tooth pick sized splinters in his wake in the same manner that all the U.S. amateur boxing prodigies did before him.. from Hearns to Del La Hoya to Holyfield... Unless your Jean Pascal and living in Canada, flashy arm punches is a kids stuff and doesn't win pro fights. Some amateur standouts never learn the pro-game. Mark Breland and Howard Davis learned very quickly that touching another fighter with the knuckled area of the glove has nothing to do with the brusing, blood and guts sport of professional boxing(make em' miss, and make em' pay!!)... Andrade,.. Step yo game up... I'm tired of seeing HBO hyping guys and promoted them as if they were the next coming of Sugar Ray Leonard or Roy Jones,.. only to watch them suffer the same ignominious defeats as Jermaine Taylor and Daniel Jacobs.

brownsugar says:

I was really impressed with Andrade's performance in the amateurs... Just recently watched a few of his pro bouts on youtube. Using a wide legged stance I saw Andrade hurled his entire body at his opponents following thru by rotating his shoulder in what should have resulted in a perfect punch capable of dropping his unexperienced opponent. But the former MMA fighter (believe me he looked like all he knew was the ground game) casually walked thru dozens of similar punches before the ref got tired of seeing him getting hit (the guy didn't throw over 6 punches in several rounds as if he couldn't comprehend the concept). Instead of dynamite..Andrade looked as though he had butter in his fists. Sometimes it can take a while for young talents to mature, and it did take him a while to get his pro career started in earnest. I think that with patience and the proper guidance he can be something special, look how long it took Ward to get the experience and confidence to move up to the next level. Maybe in a year or 2 he'll start moving in on the rankings.

Radam G says:

Whadup, BoxAnne? It's good to see you post. In the old TSSU, nutcases were claiming that you were I - the one and only Radam G. This awesome new Universe got the shutdown on delusional put downers. Ditto about Andrade! His father was meddling during the 2008 Olympic Training camps and games. That jive cost Deme a gold medal that he was favored to win. The kid could not focus. Some dads ought to get a clue and quit meddling. There are not many Pops Joy Mays, Pops Moraleses, Pops Mosleys and a few others who had the wisdom to take their sons to the top and also knew when to take a sideline seat and stop. Holla!