

Cuba's Lara KOs Raines, Ava Knight KOs Salas

Written by David A. Avila

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INDIO-Cuba's former Olympian Erislandy Lara really needed only two punches to end the fight with Arkansas boxer Delray Raines in the first round of a middleweight fight and Oakland's Ava Knight proved the long layoff was no distraction on Friday at Fantasy Springs Casino.

From the opening bell Lara (15-0, 10 KOs) looked much too polished to be fighting Raines (18-9-1, 13 KOs) who boxes out of Paris, Arkansas and looked lost in the ring. At times Lara looked puzzled and amused at Raines' defensive movements and finally saw the opening and sent the Arkansas fighter on his way home with a right hook and left cross that dropped him for a knockout at 2:59 of the first round.

"I was just warming up and getting my rhythm when I connected," said Lara. "This is my fourth fight in a row with a first round knockout. I want the winner of Rigoberto Alvarez and Austin Trout."

Oakland's Ava Knight (6-1-2, 3 KOs) was too fast and too powerful for Desert Spring's Gloria Salas (3-6-1). A left hook and right hand floored Salas who was counted out by the referee at 1:55 of the first round of a flyweight bout. Salas landed a few punches but Knight's speed was the difference. It was her first fight in 17 months but she looked to be ready to return to the elite class whether its flyweight or bantamweight.

"I was real excited to be in there. I felt real good but felt the ring rust," said Knight, who didn't take much time to mix it up with Salas and it showed. "We got the chance because Golden Boy gave us the chance and Claudia Ollis gave us the chance."

In a sloppy featherweight fight Coachella's Randy Caballero (7-0, 4 KOs) used his quick

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combinations to score when Seattle's Manuel Ortega (1-4) wasn't grabbing a hold of him in a headlock. Caballero dropped Ortega with an overhand right above the ear in the second round. After four rounds Caballero won on points 40-35 on all three judges cards.

"This fighter was a lot different but it was great experience," said Caballero. "I love fighting here in front of my hometown fans."

Junior welterweight prospect Frankie "Pitbull" Gomez (8-0, 6 KOs) had too much speed for Mexico's Luis Lugo (11-14-1, 6 KOs) in a six round bout. East L.A.'s Gomez hammered Lugo with every punch in the book and dropped the sturdy veteran with a straight left from a southpaw stance in the third round. Lugo was never in serious danger but was shut out by Gomez according to the judge's scores 60-53.

"I tried to knock him out he's a tough kid. I really wanted to knock him out but you can't knock every one out. But he had a hard head and a tough chin," Gomez said.

East L.A.'s Ramon Valadez (5-1, 2 KOs) over-powered Ensenada, Mexico's Cesar Garcia (3-6) for three rounds and opened up cuts on both eyes. By the third round referee David Mendoza had seen enough and stopped the fight at 2:32 of the third round of a lightweight bout.

Las Vegas boxer Bastie Samir won by technical knockout over Philadelphia's Greg Hackett after firing about 30 unanswered punches. Referee Pat Russell stopped the fight at 2:48 of the first round despite complaints from Hackett.

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brownsugar says: I like Lara... he's going to be too good for the likes of K-P Bundrage or James Kirkland (if he can get down to weigh,.. heard he went to 220lbs in prison, how you do that on watered down oatmeal and vienna sausages is beyond me unless he was ganking meals from the other inmates or had somebody putting cash on his books). The word is that Lara wants to step it up and get ranked in 2012. Can't wait to see where this leads.