

Leo Santa Cruz KOs Lopez, Luis Ramos & Caballero Win Too

Written by David A. Avila
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Ramos, right, got it done against Lorenzo, who slapped.

INDIO, CALIF.-Fast-rising Leo Santa Cruz met former world champion Jose “Carito” Lopez (39-10-2), who had never been knocked out or stopped, and did just that. From the beginning the fighter out of East Los Angeles used his longer reach and pinpoint timing to keep the Puerto Rican veteran from using his experience at Fantasy Springs Casino on Friday.

Lopez tried every trick he knew, including using his head, which forced a cut on Santa Cruz’s eye. That only seemed to spark the youngster into overdrive as he lashed at Lopez with long right hands to the head including a blow that seemed to catch the eye. Down went the crafty Lopez after receiving a pummeling. Referee Tony Crebs stopped the fight at 2:35 of the fifth round.

“I wanted to be the first to knock him out,” said Santa Cruz (16-0-1, 8 KOs).

Two southpaw lightweights collided, with the sharper, cleaner punching Luis Ramos (19-0, 8 KOs) proving more effective than the wild swinging Francisco Lorenzo (36-10) of New Jersey after eight rounds.

Lorenzo’s odd punching angles and overhand swings looked effective at first but he was not punching with the knuckles most of the time. Instead he was touching with the inside of his gloves, which is illegal, but referee Jerry Cantu never caught it or warned the New Jersey boxer. Most of the fans were fooled by the tactic that looks and sounds like a good blow but is really a slap.

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All three judges scored it for Ramos 79-73, 77-75, 77-75, who remains undefeated.

“My plan was to out box him and frustrate him and I think I did,” said Ramos. “We traded blows but I think I got the better of him.”

Lorenzo has never been knocked out or stopped, despite fighting Humberto Soto, Erik Morales and Roman Martinez.

Popular Randy Caballero (11-0, 7 KOs) knocked out Chicago’s Sergio Cristobal (3-2) with a counter right hand at 2:06 of round four after back and forth action for the two bantamweights. It looked like Caballero was going to end the night in the first round when a perfectly timed right to the chin floored Cristobal, but he roughed it out.

Rounds two and three saw Cristobal carry the action with intense pressure that forced the fight to go inside. But Caballero kept his cool and looked for big shots in between the Chicago fighter’s combinations. It was good action.

“My opponent came forward and put a lot of pressure on me,” said Caballero, who lives and trains in nearby Coachella. “I knew I could wear him down and then knock him out.”

Round four saw Caballero hurt Cristobal with a couple of left hooks. That left an impression on the Chicago fighter that resulted in Caballero returning to the right hand that knocked down Cristobal hard. His corner alerted referee Jerry Cantu to wisely stop the fight. He’s too good a fighter to let him take more punishment.

“I’m going to make it to the top,” predicts Caballero, whose next fight will be at Fantasy Springs Casino on July 1.

Arizona’s undefeated Javier Loya (5-0, 4 KOs) drove in from Phoenix knowing he was fighting hometown boxer and undefeated boxer Jose Vargas (5-1-2) in a six round junior welterweight

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bout. He took it anyway and stopped Vargas with a left hook and right hand for a technical knockout at 2:53 of the first round.

“I’m hungry. I came over here to show them what I can do,” said Loya, who was losing the round before staggering, then knocking out Vargas. “I saw that he was open for a left hook and I hurt him with it.”

One of boxing’s better fighters with a losing record, Juan Sandoval (4-6-1), kept a win- streak alive with his second consecutive win. This one came via knockout over Pomona’s Rene Torres (0-5-1) at 2:27 of the second round of a junior lightweight contest. San Bernardino’s Sandoval has received some poor decisions in the past against hometown fighters so he’s been even more aggressive. The lanky long-armed Sandoval floored Ramos with four right hands to the body in the second round. When the fight resumed Sandoval targeted the head and gained a knockout with a left-right combination. Referee Tony Crebs counted 10.

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