

Rest of the Action from Top Rank Live Show in Texas

Written by Kelsey McCarson
Sunday, 01 April 2012 20:04



San Antonio, Texas – They say everything is bigger in Texas, but you wouldn't know it from the size of the fighters who frequent the increasingly popular live fight cards popping up all around the Lone Star State.

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Saturday night's Top Rank Live show at the Illusions Theater of the Alamodome was no different. More than just [the return of former middleweight champion Kelly "The Ghost" Pavlik](#), the fight bill was chock-full of fan-friendly bantam, feather and lightweights eager to make names for themselves in front of the estimated fifteen hundred fight fans in attendance.

The night kicked off with junior middleweights, as **Bryant Perrella (2-0, 2 KOs)** used youth, a four-inch reach advantage and his superior skill set to sharply pound his way to a TKO victory over the winless Arturo Lopez (0-2, 0 KOs).

The bout was halted by referee John Schorle—yes that John Schorle—at 2:08 of the fourth and final round.

Lopez was visibly upset afterwards and probably had right to feel that way considering he appeared to be fully alert with less than a minute left to go. Still, the fight was never in doubt and Lopez didn't appear to have enough firepower to change anything over the next fifty plus seconds.

Schorle was the third man in the ring for several other matches during the night, most notably Kelly Pavlik's win over Aaron Jaco later that evening. The Texas crowd either didn't notice, didn't care or believed his controversial disqualification of Carlos Molina against James Kirkland the preceding week in Houston was justified.

Next up were featherweights. Undefeated **Saul Rodriguez (4-0, 4 KOs)** landed a crisp left hook seconds into his fight with Ricardo Valencia (1-3-1, 0 KOs), and ended it seconds later with a beautiful barrage of furious hooks and uppercuts. The fight was halted with only nineteen seconds having gone by in round one. Valencia was still on his feet, but just barely, as the referee wisely waved off the contest.

Light heavyweight prospect **Eduardo Alicea (3-0, 2 KOs)** defeated Edwynn Jones (1-4-1, 1 KO) in probably the most lackluster affair of the evening. Alicea boxed his way to a careful unanimous decision win by controlling the fight with his jab. He was the busier man throughout and deserved the clear decision.

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A very game **Victor Sanchez (1-3-1, 0 KOs)** came to the ring with mean intentions and did his best Jack Dempsey impression against undefeated prospect **Luis Zarazua (3-0-1, 1 KO)**.

Sanchez got it going early by rolling his shoulders, bobbing, weaving and bouncing up and down to get in position to throw fierce uppercuts and hooks, many of which he landed.

Zarazua was obliged to engage, which led to a good scrap, though he was content to stand his ground and wheel in forceful counter shots. At times, Sanchez seemed to forget that Dempsey would never stop moving and soon discovered why. The less he moved, the more Zarazua would land sharp, straight punches that stunned him.

In the fourth and final round, with the fight still hanging in the balance, Sanchez let his hands go like a windmill despite appearing to be dead tired. He hurt Zarazua with a left hook which helped him pull out a majority draw by scores of 39-37 (Zarazua), and 38-38 twice.

Hometown kid **Adam Lopez (2-0, 1 KO)** stalked fellow bantamweight Ramon Bayala (0-3-1, 0 KOs) around the ring until he ran into a perfectly placed counter right which dropped him in round number three. Lopez was noticeably dazed but made it to his feet, even landing hard shots of his own by the end of the round. The final round saw Lopez continue his hard charging ways against the Puerto Rican counterpuncher to the same success he carried through most of the fight, and he wasn't knocked down or hurt again. Lopez took home a well-deserved unanimous decision despite suffering the unexpected scare.

All three judges had it 38-36 for Lopez.

If there's any one young Top Rank prospect worth getting excited about for his potential of someday being a world champion, it's probably nineteen-year-old lightweight prospect **Ivan Najera (7-0, 7 KOs)**

) who defeated James Lester (9-8, 4 KOs) by spectacular first round knockout. Najera fought fiercely and aggressively, and he had Lester down twice in the first round. The last knockdown left Lester sprawled face first and helpless on the canvas in what was the knockout of the night.

Finally, despite all the talk about the show being Kelly Pavlik's return to the ring, the main event of the evening actually featured two exciting featherweights, **Frankie Leal (17-6-3, 10 KOs)** and

eny Gradovich (13-0, 7 KOs).

It was a stirring firefight with good action throughout. Gradovich, nicknamed “the Mexican Russian,” employed a strategy of coming forward and wheeling uppercuts. Leal countered by holding a high guard and throwing straight punches to try and head his opponent off at the pass.

The crowd seemed entertained as the fight played itself out. Leal would hurl one-twos at Gradovich and stay behind a quick jab. Gradovich would try and follow that jab back to Leal’s chest and, once there, fire off his punches.

Gradovich started getting braver in the fifth round and started coming forward even more while throwing punches from every angle imaginable. Up, down, left, right—he’d throw whatever he thought would land, and seemed to just get the better of Leal as the fight progressed. Sure, Leal would have his moments. His control of distance kept him in the fight until the bitter end, but Gradovich was just too strong and too willing to engage.

Gradovich finished him off in the tenth and final round with a brutal left hook that hurt Leal badly. The brave warrior made it to his feet, but referee Rafael Ramos stopped it at 2:15 of the tenth and final round.

Leal was taken away on a stretcher as a precautionary measure which underscored the fierceness of the shot he took as well as the indomitable will it must have taken for him to climb to his feet before the count of ten. We hear Leal was “OK and resting up” not long after the finish, thankfully.

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brownsugar says:

Glad to see Pavlik in a fight he can finally be proud of, hopefully this will lead to some more positive results in future contests.

I know a few guys who were severe alchy's in their other lives. each one has come to the

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conclusion that they must forego one of the most basic pleasures and privileges in life...the right to drink and get drunk in your own spare time.

in order to be successful, each of the afore mentioned individuals had to make a life long uncompromising decision.... which is....As long as they are able to draw a breath,... they can never again consume alcohol.

Each of these guys have rebuilt thier lives and have never touched the stuff again, they also have a full wet bar to help them entertain family and friends when they stop by,.....they will even throw the occasional party.

If Kelly can reach that point of uncompromising recovery he could still hold a few surprises for the fans.

It's not easy but regular hard working "Civilians" do it all the time. You would think that as much discipline as it takes to be a boxer, Kelly would have the advantage when it comes to making good life affirming choices and sticking to it..

Hope he's able to put the demons aside and get back to what he does best.

in regards to the Texas Card,.. wish I was there.