LOS ANGELES (Dec. 16, 2012) – Professional boxing returned to the CBS Television Network on Saturday afternoon for the first time in 15 years. In SHOWTIME Sports presentation of "SHOWTIME BOXING on CBS," unbeaten **Leo Santa Cruz** capped a spectacular year by retaining his International Boxing Federation (IBF) World Bantamweight Championship with an exciting and closely contested 12-round unanimous decision win over previously unbeaten
Alberto Guevara
, live on

CBS
from the
Los Angeles Memorial Sports Arena
.

Santa Cruz (23-0-1, 13 KO's), of Los Angeles, won the lone bout on the CBS broadcast, the network's first since **Bernard Hopkins** knocked out **Glen Johnson** on Jan. 20, 1997, by the scores of 119-109, 118-110 and 116-112. Making his initial start in the United States, **Guevara**
(16-1, 6 KO's) of San Diego, Calif., made it close for six rounds but couldn't sustain his momentum as Santa Cruz came on strongly to close the show.

Santa Cruz was making the third defense of the IBF 118-pound title he won with a 12-round decision over **Vusi Malinga** last June 2 on SHOWTIME®. In his two defenses, both also on SHOWTIME, he knocked out **Eric Morel**
and
Victor Zaleta
in September and November, respectively.

The 24-year-old Santa Cruz didn't dominate Guevara like he did the previous two challengers, but credit goes to Guevara for taking the aggressive Santa Cruz out of his game plan – at least for a while. It also didn't help Santa Cruz that he hurt his right hand.

"I want to thank **Al Haymon**, **Golden Boy** and all of my supporters because otherwise I wouldn't have been able to fight on CBS," Santa Cruz said. "I'm sorry I didn't give as good of a show today. I felt a little different. I couldn't breathe after the third round, so I had to breathe through my mouth. I messed up my right hand in sparring -- that's why I moved to southpaw.

"I usually throw more body shots, but he was running too much. I have been fighting a lot in the last several months and didn't give my body enough time to rest."

Guevara was fighting for the first time outside his native Mexico. His plan from the outset was to not allow the defending champ to dictate the pace. He was successful for much of the early

rounds.

“I think I did great. I was very tough for him,” Guevara, a virtual unknown coming in, said. “Leo is very good, very tough and very strong. I know I hurt him in the 12th round, but he hurt me in the fifth.

“I said that I was going to be in there and not run around. I had to stay with my style and box. I felt like I trained for one and a half men. They called us for the fight three weeks ago.”

In non-televised action, **Joseph “Jo-Jo” Diaz Jr**., a 2012 U.S. Olympian from South El Monte, Calif., scored one knockdown en route to winning a lopsided four-round decision over
Vicente Alfaro
(5-3, 1 KO) of Northfield, Minn.
(Due to time constraints, the Diaz fight did not make the CBS broadcast).

“It felt great to turn pro,” said Diaz, a southpaw who triumphed by the scores of 40-35 on all three scorecards. “I need to get my timing down as a professional, but overall it was a great experience. It was great motivation to fight in my hometown of LA. I wanted to put on a good show and I think I did.

“Hopefully I will get in there again in January or February.”

Two of Diaz’s U.S. Olympic teammates were also victorious. Junior middleweight **Errol Spence Jr.** (2-0, 2 KO’s), of Brentwood, N.Y., won by second-round knockout over
Richard Andrews
(5-3-3, 2 KO’s), of Charlottesville, Va., and light heavyweight
Marcus Browne
(2-0, 2 KO’s), of Staten Island, N.Y., registered a first-round knockout over
Ritchie Cherry
(3-6, 1 KO), of Oklahoma City, Okla.

Comment on this article