

## Cano Beats Theophane in PPV Opener; Molina Beats Smith in Snoozer

Written by Michael Woods

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In the "The One" Showtime PPV TV opener, Ashley Theophane took on Ashley Theophane, in a 143 pound showdown between fighters looking to get over the hump, from viable challenger types, to titlists in the near future. It was Cano, who buzzed Theo at the MGM Grand in the third and fifth, noticeably, who had his hand raised, and likely got himself another money fight.

The arbiters had it a split decision, with one judge liking Theophane 96-94, while the others had it 98-92, and 97-93, for the Mexican.

I liked the 98-92 Cano card, myself.

The Brit came in at 33-5-1, while the Mexican was 26-3-1.

Cano came out banging, throwing wide and straight, head and body. Theo looked to keep moving, trying not to present a stationary target. Cano kept on targeting his body, to slow him down. A cut formed on Cano's left eye during the second. Showtime analyst Paul Malignaggi, who fought and beat Cano last October, called him an "underrated technician." He buzzed Theo at 1:30 in the third, and Theo, who has never been down, had to work to stay on his feet. A sharp left hook did the damage to the Brit, who was throwing his own too-wide version at the same time.

In the fourth, Cano kept on stalking, throwing bombs. Theo was buzzed again in the fifth, this time by a right hand. Then Cano got backed up by a left hook, a bit later. Blood came from Theo's nose when he sat down after the fifth, right after he landed a sharp right at the bell. Theo was committing more to his shots, many of them, in the fifth and the sixth. Cano wasn't folding, though. Theo landed clean shots in the seventh, as Cano wasn't quit as peppy. By now, Theo was staying put, not moving so much, and this was a busy fight. Cano bit down and got busy and nasty in the ninth. Cano's clean rights took the tenth. We went to the cards.

Carlos Molina took on Ishe Smith, who entered with the IBF 154 pound crown, in the second scrap on "The One" pay-per-view. It was a tough fight to score, and tough to watch, frankly.

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After 12 less than thrilling rounds, the judges saw it a split decision; the scores were 117-111 (Molina), 116-112 (Smith) and 116-112 (Molina).

Al Bernstein and Paul Malignaggi both saw a draw.

The Nevadan Smith, who admitted that a lagging career put thoughts of suicide in his head years ago, came in with a 25-5 record. He beat K9 Bundrage, and took his crown earlier this year.

The Mexican-born Molina, who lives in Chicago, was 21-5-2 coming in. In the first, Molina looked to press, be first. Smith backed up, and ate a right at 1:35 of the second. We wondered what she might do to change the tone in the third, or if he would, at all? In the fourth, Smith got a second warning for low blows. Molina came in head-first a few times, and was warned. Showtime's Al Bernstein admitted that this was a hard fight to score at the start of the fifth. Molina was busier, but Smith is a savvy defender. Jay Nady threatened a point deduction if Molina led again with his head. In the sixth, the boys again missed a bunch, and the fight wasn't playing out as a pleasing scrap. Same for the seventh, and eighth. Smith popped the jab more regularly, and countered smartly at times down the stretch. Would the judges go with the dogged Molina and the more cerebral Smith after 12?

Smith went 165-700 to 133-704 for Molina, a very poor connect percentage in a very lackluster bout.

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### **Hop says:**

Very good fight that should be being mentioned more. Thanks, Editor Mike. On the other hand, I did not find the Molina-Smith match very interesting, and looked forward to it getting over.