

Ponomarev Tops Hollywood Fight Card on Thursday Night

Written by David A. Avila

Friday, 15 November 2013 16:21



HOLLYWOOD, CALIF.---Hollywood's semi-famous Florentine Gardens was the backdrop to a full fight card led by undefeated Russian boxer Konstantin Ponomarev on Thursday night. There was also a tribute to late boxing writer great, Joe Rein.

With a number of boxing celebrities watching Ponomarev (22-0, 11 Kos) won by technical knockout against Sacramento's always tough Rogelio Castaneda (26-19-3). The Bash Boxing event was attended by former champions Steve Forbes and Henry Tillman.

Ponomarev jumped out aggressively toward Castaneda at the opening bell. Early in the first round, both clashed heads and Castaneda emerged with a cut smack middle of his forehead. It bled profusely.

Castaneda is a real professional. He may not have the glowing record but when it comes to the art of boxing the Sacramento prizefighter knows every move and counter-move. Ponomarev tried repeatedly to overwhelm with blistering combinations but was met with overhand rights and left uppercuts that stopped each skirmish.

After two rounds of give and trade, you could see that Ponomarev decided to put on his thinking cap. He tried bull rushing and then he tried countering, but it always resulted in a stalemate. But at the end of round two Castaneda looked severely winded.

Both fighters clashed and countered in the third round. Ponomarev seemed to have an edge in speed and power, but Castaneda would open up with his own combinations at just the right time and connected often. But he never could hurt or stun the young Russian. At the end of round three Castaneda's corner called the fight off. The Sacramento boxer hurt his leg during one of the last exchanges and could no longer continue. Ponomarev had another knockout win.

Other bouts

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Heavyweight Charles Martin (12-0-1, 10 Kos) entered the boxing ring as usual, by stepping over the ropes. He's that big. The St. Louis native looked like an easy winner when opponent Joey Dawejko (8-3-2) stepped into the ring. Martin looked like he had at least a 12-inch height advantage over the almost albino looking Philadelphia heavyweight.

Martin is one hard-hitting heavyweight. When he tags someone, they stay tagged. But Dawejko is a clever heavyweight who knows how to use space, slight movement and counters at the precise moment necessary. It was a good cat and mouse performance by both heavyweights. Martin was tagged a couple of times but kept focus and eventually landed the big blow that delivered Dawejko to the deck in the fourth round. The smaller heavyweight beat the count and resumed fighting, but his corner asked the fight to be stopped at 3:00 of round four. It was another knockout victory for Martin, who is trained by former Olympic gold medalist Tillman.

The most competitive fight occurred early on the fight card when local boxer Joaquin Chavez (6-10-3) of East L.A. and Brooklyn's Dimash Niyazov (4-0-1) tangled in a junior welterweight skirmish. If you know anything about those two locales they're like mirror images and their fighters, though different in style, never gave in and ended in a split draw after six rounds.

Greek heavyweight Thanasis Michaloudis (6-0, 6 Kos) showed very quick hands against Robert Dunton (9-10-1). The tall heavyweight has a hands high defense and works primarily as a counter-puncher. But when he let loose with his combinations they were very quick and powerful. He knocked out Dunton at 2:22 of round one.

Oxnard bantamweight Erik Ruiz (10-1, 5 Kos) nailed Tijuana's Rigoberto Casillas (9-12-1) with a perfect counter right to drop him. Then when the fight resumed a four-punch combination put down Casillas again. Referee Wayne Hedgepeth wisely stopped the fight at 1:36 of round one.

Ukrainian cruiserweight Vyacheslav Shabransky (6-0, 5 Kos) patiently figured out Mexico's awkwardly clever Rafael Valenzuela (8-2) before lowering the boom. A right hand to the top of Valenzuela's head sent the herky jerky Mexican fighter to the floor at 1:58 of round two for a knockout.

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United Kingdom's John Quigley (10-0, 2 Kos) dominated Dominic Coca (8-6) with his hands down defense and Prince Naseem Hamed type moves. Quigley switched from southpaw to orthodox and hit Coca with punches from different angles. All three judges gave Quigley every round to win a unanimous decision in a lightweight bout.

Zack Wohlman (6-1-1) defeated Canada's Steve Conkin (4-7-1) by unanimous decision after a four round welterweight match. Wohlman showed good defense against the gritty Conkin to win by unanimous decision.

Last note:

The tribute to Joe Rein came before the main event. Rein was a screenwriter and also contributed to www.TheSweetscience.com frequently. Several times I met with Mr. Rein and engaged in great conversations with him at a diner in Santa Monica. He was one of those guys you never forget.

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