

Friday evening, June 29th, 2011, Jimmy Burchfield's Classic Entertainment and Sports lived up to its commitment of "keeping the class in boxing" with an old-school fight card that showcased a wide variety of gifted fighters. All of the combatants lived up to their potential, producing a night of theatre that left boxing fans in awe.

In opening action, Worcester, Massachusetts's Jose Torres stepped in the ring to make his pro-debut against last minute replacement Josh Harris (8- 5, 6 KOs) of Akron, Ohio. From the opening the bell, Torres initiated the action, peppering Harris with stiff jabs, followed by several crushing right hooks and a vicious body attack. Torres continued this non-stop onslaught the majority of the four rounds, continuously wobbling Harris throughout the bout. In the end, Harris's methodical pressure and experience turned out to be too much for the green Torres to handle. Harris landed a massive hook at the end of the fourth, which instantly floored Torres, forcing the referee to bring the fight to a halt at 2:23 of the round.

In Welterweight action, Jonathan Vazquez (4-0-1, 3 KOs) of New Bedford, MA, and Augustine Mauras (1-0-1, 1 KO) of Lawrence, MA, had the opportunity to resume their amateur rivalry in a *Rock em', Sock em', Somebody's O must go* battle. Mauras put the pressure on early, swarming Vazquez with consecutive punches to the body, along with left-hooks to the head. Vazquez countered effectively with upper-cuts and body shots of his own. Midway through the fight, just when it looked as if Mauras' pressure was about to take control, Vazquez responded with straight right hands that snapped Mauras' head back. The conclusion would be two fighters standing toe-to-toe, with the ending result a majority four-round draw with scores of 39-37, 38-38, and 38-38.

Edwin Soto (7-0-1, 3 KOs) of New Haven, CT, kept his undefeated streak intact with an impressive TKO victory over Michael Denby (3-11-4, 2 KOs) of Felton, DE. Soto assumed control from the beginning, landing numerous punches to the body and head, until the final blow, a crunching left hook to the liver, forced the halt at 2:26 of the third round.

Super Middleweight Greg McCoy (3-3, 1 KO) of New Haven, CT, ended his losing streak with a hard fought unanimous decision over Ralph Johnson (0-2) of Worcester, MA. Johnson's awkward style confused McCoy in the early stages of the fight, even staggering him at times. Midway through the third, McCoy began to find success with right-hand body shots that stopped Johnson in his tracks. These shots allowed McCoy to rally in the fourth, assuring a unanimous four-round victory.

Also in Super Middleweight action, Keith Kozlin (6-2-1, 4 KOs) of Warwick, RI, and Reynaldo Rodriguez (5-2-1, 2 KOs) of Woonsocket, RI, squared off in a match that was a candidate for "fight of the night". The first two rounds resembled a game of chess, with each fighter trying to set up the other. The action began to heat up in round number three, with both fighters

landing precise left hooks. The action would ignite even further in the fourth, when both fighters hit the canvas within twenty-seconds of each other, but managed to regroup, standing toe-to-toe in the middle of the ring before the bell sounded. The intensity of this fight, along with the strong will these fighters demonstrated, brought the crowd to its feet, but left the judges confused. The result...a six-round majority draw, with scores of 40-36, Kozlin, and 38-38 from the two other judges. This decision left the fans and fighters craving a rematch.

As we moved on to the Middleweight division, Thomas Falowo (4-0, 4KOs) of Pawtucket, RI, made short work of Russ Niggemeyer (2-3, 2 KOs) of Hilliard, Ohio. Falowo boxed aggressively in round one, forcing Niggemeyer to bob-and-weave, never able to mount any offense. In round two, Falowo would close the gap early, knocking Niggemeyer to the canvas in the opening of the round. As Niggemeyer tried to get back to feet, he stumbled back down to the canvas, forcing the referee to stop the fight forty seconds in.

The flashy pride of Poland, heavyweight Artur Szpilka (7-0, 5 KOs) of Wieliczka, Poland, showed a dazzling display of speed and power, dismantling David Williams (6-5-1, 2 KOs) of Philadelphia, PA, at 1:53 of the first round. The Polish fans in attendance went wild as they saw their native son knock his foe to the canvas. There is no doubt that this young, knock-out sensation has a bright future in boxing ahead of him.

In a special attraction, former multi-world champion, Jose Antonio Rivera (41-6-1) of Worcester, MA, used his cagey veteran skills to out-box and out-class the game Paul Mpendo (7-8-4, 3 KOs) of Portland, Oregon, in battle of Light Middleweights. Rivera started off slow, allowing Mpendo to appear to be in the fight, but by round six, it was apparent that he was in complete control, as his body-shots and over-hand rights landed with precision and power. Rivera walked away with a unanimous eight-round decision, earning scores of 79-73 and 80-72.

Undefeated Heavyweight Mariusz Wach (25-0, 13 KOs) of Bergen, NJ, lived up to his reputation as one of the most viable forces in the Heavyweight division, with his fourth-round destruction of Kevin McBride (35-10-1, 29 KOs) of Brockton, MA, that earned him the vacant WBC International Title. Wach, calm, cool, and collected from the opening bell, consistently hit McBride with left jabs and right hands to the body. The only demonstration of offense from McBride that seemed to impact Wach was a right-hand followed by an elbow that caused blood to spew out of Wach's ear. This injury only seemed to anger Wach, who retaliated with a vicious over-hand right that knocked McBride unconscious at 2:25 of the fourth round. This knockout kept McBride on the canvas for minutes after the fight, forcing him to be carried out of the arena on a stretcher.

In the final bout of the evening, New Haven, Connecticut's Elvin Ayala (24-5-1, 11 KOs) continued his winning streak with a masterful display of ring generalship against Darrick

Fendley (18-6, 11 KOs) of Gary, Indiana. Early on, the allusive Ayala never allowed the durable Fendley to get close enough to land punches of any significance. In the later stages of the fight, where it seemed as if Findley was beginning to find range, Ayala opened a cut over his opponent's eye, and began to pour on blistering over-hand rights and combinations keeping Findley even further at bay. For his efforts, Ayala picked up a unanimous ten-round decision, along with the WBC USNBC Title.

It is unforgettable nights of boxing such as these that keep a century-old profession alive and well in today's fast changing world.

By Michael Natalino