

## The Past Week in Action 13 August 2018

### Highlights:

- Joseph Diaz beats Jesus Rojas but having failed to make the weight can't win the secondary WBA feather title and Rojas remains champion.
- Trevor Bryan floors BJ Flores six times on the way to winning the vacant interim WBA heavyweight title
- Edis Tatli retains European lightweight title with points victory over Frank Urquiaga

### August 9

**Tokyo, Japan: Welter: Keita Obara (20-3-1) W TKO 3 Alvin Lagumbay (10-3). Feather: Taiki Minamoto (16-5) W TKO 9 Tatsuya Otsubo (12-9-1).**

#### **Obara vs. Lagumbay**

Revenge is sweet for Obara as he halts Filipino southpaw Lagumbay to regain the WBO Asia Pacific title. The local fighter was determined to win decisively. Obara put Lagumbay down with a right in the first. In the second Lagumbay was swinging hard but Obara was showing a tight defence and countering with hard accurate shots. Obara stormed out in the third hurting Lagumbay early and a savage attack saw Lagumbay forced to the canvas and the referee stopped the fight. Obara, 31, lost to Eduard Troyanovsky in a challenge for the IBF super light title in 2016. His loss on a second round kayo against Lagumbay in April was a major shock and a very unusual ending. Both fighters went down simultaneously from a punch but whereas Lagumbay made it to his feet Obara did not. Filipino "Time Bomb" Lagumbay had won 8 of his last 9 fights but now gets his second inside the distance defeat.

#### **Minamoto vs. Otsubo**

Minamoto comes from behind to halt challenger Otsubo and retain the National title. Otsubo attacked hard from the start getting past Minamoto's jab and flooring the champion with a wicked straight right in the third. That acted as a wake-up call for Minamoto and he outscored Otsubo in the fourth and fifth to close some of the gap on the three cards to 46-48. Otsubo looked to be tiring in the sixth and Minamoto took that round and the seventh to level the scores. Minamoto weakened Otsubo further in the eighth and when an exhausted Otsubo went down in the ninth the fight was stopped. Minamoto failed in a challenge for the Japanese super bantam title in 2015 then moved up to feather and won the National feather title. This is his sixth win in a row and his first defence of the title. First loss by KO/TKO for Japanese No 3 Otsubo and second unsuccessful challenge for this title.

### August 10

**Osaka, Japan: Super Fly: Takayuki Okumotot (21-8-3) W PTS 10 Hiroyuki Kudaka (26-17-2).** Okamoto lifts the Japanese title with points victory over defending champion Kudaka in a clash of local fighters. Southpaw Okamoto, the younger man, made an impressive start. Kudaka responded with some body punches but was cut

over his left eye in the third. The fourth and fifth were close rounds but at the half way mark Okumoto was slightly in front on all three cards. Kudaka tried hard to close the gap over the second half of the fight and despite also suffering cuts on both cheeks he came close. Scores 96-94 for Okumoto from all three judges. Okumoto, 26, wins the National title at the second attempt. Kudaka, 33, lost to Omar Narvaez in a challenge for the WBO super fly title in 2013. He was making the first defence of the Japanese title but he has fallen away since the challenge to Narvaez and is now 4-6-1 in his last 11 fights.

**Bangkok, Thailand: Super Fly: Stamp Kiatniwat (21-2) W PTS 12 Rolly Sumalpong (10-3-2). Fly: Dennapa K (20-1) W KO 4 Crison Omayao (24-17-4). Stamp (Yutthana Kaensa ) vs. Sumalpong**

Stamp (Yutthana Kaensa ) given a good test by Filipino Sumalpong as he gets back into the winning column and regains the WBA Asian super fly title. . Scores 116-112 twice and 117-111 for Stamp. The Thai, who turned pro at 15, lost to Kazuto Ioka for the secondary WBA flyweight title in June last year and suffered his second defeat in May this year when he was knocked out in two rounds by modest Filipino Jaysever Abcede. Sumalpong goes to 1-3-1 in his last 5 contests.

**Dennapa vs. Omayao**

Thai Dennapa (Sarawut Thawornkham) floors and halts Filipino Omayao in four rounds. The 26-year-old southpaw has won his last eleven fights by KO/TKO and is No 2 with the WBA despite the low quality of his victims. Seventh loss inside the distance for the former Philippines minimumweight champion.

**Los Angeles, CA, USA: Feather: Emilio Sanchez (16-1) W RTD 5 Chris Martin (30-10-3). Light: Hector Tanajara (15-0) W PTS 8 Emmanuel Morales (7-3). Sanchez vs. Martin**

Sanchez rebounds from his first loss with win over a very faded Martin. Sanchez bossed this one from the start. He marched forward scoring with sharp accurate combinations with Martin lacking the power to keep Sanchez out. Sanchez dumped Martin on the canvas in the third with a right uppercut and although Martin got up he spent the rest of the round and the fourth and fifth taking punishment and his corner pulled him out of the fight. The 24-year-old Californian Sanchez suffered an upset loss to Eugene Lagos in March but is now back on track. How the mighty have fallen. Okay a bit of an overstatement in reference to Martin but at one time the "SD Kid" was 23-0-2 but he is now 2-8 in his last 10 fights.

**Tanajara vs. Morales**

Tanajara continues along his unbeaten way as he outscores Morales. The tall youngster from San Antonio worked everything off a strong jab and Morales was never able to threaten. By the end Morales could hardly see from his right eye due to attention from Tanajara's jab as Tanajara took every round. Scores 80-72 from the three judges for the 5'10" , 21-year-old Tanajara. Puerto Rican Morales is 2-3 in his last five fights.

**Tampa, FL, USA: Bantam: Ricardo Espinoza (21-2) W TKO 2 Daniel Lozano (15-5). Feather: Hairon Socarras (19-0-3) W PTS 10 Jose Nieves (22-5-3). Feather: Jean Carlos Rivera (15-0) W KO 2 Luis Hinojosa (31-15).Light: Nestor Bravo (14-0) W RTD 1 Isaias Cardona (24-14).**

#### **Espinoza vs. Lozano**

Unheralded Mexican youngster Espinoza springs upset as he beats Lozano in two rounds. Espinoza took the fight to Lozano in the first and ended the fight in style in the second. A right to the head stunned Lozano and Espinoza pinned him to the ropes pounding away until Lozano dropped to his knees. Lozano beat the count but when the action resumed Espinoza took him to the ropes again and landed some fierce left hooks to the head that dropped Lozano for the second time and the referee did not even bother to count. Although previously just a prelim fighter who was 2-2 in fights in the US, and facing the WBO No 4 in Lozano, Espinoza looked impressive here. A pro at 17 Espinoza now has 18 wins by KO/TKO. Floridian "Scorpion" Lozano took almost two years out but returned last year with wins over world title challengers David Carmona and Ricardo Rodriguez so was in good form but gets his second loss by KO/TKO.

#### **Socarras vs. Nieves**

Career best win for Socarras as he easily outpoints a disappointing Nieves. Scores 100-90 twice and 99-91. Nieves is the nearest the Cuban-born Socarras has come to a "name" opponent and there has been some inconsistency in a couple of disappointing draws but at 25 he has time to improve, Veteran Puerto Rican southpaw Nieves was knocked out inside a round by Shinsuke Yamanaka for the WBC bantam title in 2013 and did not return to action again until losing on points to Alberto Mercado in March this year.

#### **Rivera vs. Hinojosa**

Puerto Rican prospect Rivera continues his progress. He ended this one with a rib ripping left hook in the second round. Now ten wins by KO/TKO for the 22-year-old Orlando based puncher including five early endings in his last six fights. Dominican Hinojosa going the other way with five losses by KO/TKO in his last six fights.

#### **Bravo vs. Cardona**

Another power show from Bravo as he makes it a good night for Puerto Rican prospects. Bravo almost finished it with a left hook in the first that put Cardona down. Cardona managed to beat the count and stay around until the bell and then did not come out for the second round. Bravo gets his eighth first round win. He was a top level amateur and at the prestigious Jose Che Aponte Tournament took the gold medal by beating Brazilian Robinson Conceicao who went on to win the gold in Rio. Cardona on a steep downward path. He started 17-0 but is 2-7 in his last 9 fights with all seven losses coming inside four rounds.

**Kempton Park, South Africa: Super Middle; Rowan Campbell (8-0) W PTS 12 Renson Hobyani (8-3). Middle: Wade Groth (7-0) W TKO 6 Wynand Mulder (4-6-1).**

#### **Campbell vs. Hobyani**

Cameron wins the vacant South African title with close unanimous decision over Hobyani. The scores were closer than the fight looked to be. Campbell made the running being on the front foot and pressing the action all the way. Hobyani was clever and awkward and was stealing rather than winning rounds. His tactics kept the fight close but made it a disappointing fight. Campbell put Hobyani down with a right in the tenth and that proved a big factor in the fight. Campbell finished the stronger and looked a clear winner. Scores all for Cameron were 116-111 which looked about right or even a bit generous to Hobyani, 115-113 and 114-113 meaning that without the knockdown the fight would have been a draw. Local fighter Campbell had not been past six rounds in a fight but he paced this one well. Hobyani was No 1 in the South African ratings,

#### **Groth vs. Mulder**

Groth overpowers Mulder to win the interim South African title. Mulder was in the fight early but the strong, hard-punching Groth systematically broke him down before driving him to the canvas in sixth to force the stoppage. Fifth win by KO/TKO for Groth the South African No 1. All of Mulder's six losses have come by KO/TKO. This was only for the interim title as the champion Barend van Rooyen is suspended reportedly for a "doping violation" but he is appealing against the suspension.

#### **August 11**

**Sampacho, Argentina: Super Feather: Jose Romero (19-0) W PTS 10 Javier Herrera (15-2). Super Bantam: Julian Aristule (33-9) W TKO 5 Alejandro Gaspar (12-4-2).**

#### **Romero vs. Herrera**

Local fighter Romero gets controversial unanimous verdict over Herrera. Romero just edged the first round but in the second Herrera backed Romero into a corner and put him down with a left hook. Romero was up at six and badly shaken but made it to the bell. He recovered and boxing on the back foot and countering looked to have edged the third and fourth. The fifth and sixth were close but the power of Herrera saw him just have the better of the exchanges. Romero won the sixth with a peach of an uppercut and some hard rights and just edged the seventh. It was near disaster for Romero in the eighth as Herrera sent him staggering into the ropes with a couple of rights and Romero had to hold to survive. The ninth was another close round but Romero produced the better work in the last. Scores 97-92, 97 ½-93 ½, 97-94 ½ all for Romero who wins the vacant Argentinian and IBF International titles. The 22-year-old former Argentinian amateur champion was rated No 1 going into this fight but many saw him as a very lucky winner. Herrera, 25, the Argentinian No 7, had won his last nine fights and this was his first scheduled ten round fight. He deserves a return.

#### **Aristule vs. Gaspar**

Southpaw Aristule, the Argentinian No 6, gets brutal stoppage of Gaspar to advance to the semi-finals of a National super-bantamweight Tournament. Aristule's power had Gaspar in trouble from the start. He had Gaspar stunned in the fourth with the

referee moving in and giving Gaspar a standing count. In the fifth Aristule dropped Gaspar with a thudding left. Gaspar beat the count but was driven to the ropes. They stood and swapped wild punches with Aristule landing a series of neck-snapping lefts to the head that eventually sent Gaspar down the ropes and on to the floor and the fight was waived off. Now 17 wins by KO/TKO for the 34-year-old former Argentinian champion. He will now meet Roman Reynosa in the semi final on 5 October. Gaspar the Argentinian No 3 suffers his third loss by KO/TKO.

**Sydney, Australia: Super Feather: Billel Dib (22-3) W PTS 10 Bruno Vifuaviwili (21-2-1).** Dib gets revenge for an upset loss to Vifuaviwili in March and also wins the WBA Oceania title. Dib never let the Tanzanian get a toe hold in the fight. The Australian outboxed Vifuaviwili being quicker, more accurate and busier. Vifuaviwili tried to press the fight but was too slow to really pose any threat to Dib. Scores 100-90 twice and 98-92 for Dib who badly needed this win after suffering consecutive losses. Billel, the younger brother of former IBF champion Billy, had a twelve-bout winning run broken by a points loss to Yuandale Evans in April last year and then dropped a majority verdict against Vifuaviwili in March this year. Vifuaviwili had won 15 in a row including the victory over Dib which gave him the vacant WBA Oceania so he loses his title in his first defence.

**Quellon, Chile: Bantam: Jose Velasquez (21-6-2) W KO 2 Jonathan Burgos (13-6-1).** After a poor first round home town fighter Velasquez ends it in the second with a body shot. It looked as though this might be a difficult night for the local hero Burgos looked a couple of divisions bigger than the little Chilean and dominated the first round with stiff jabs and long rights. Bustos started the second confidently landing a left jab/straight right/left hook combination and waving his arms over his head in appreciation of his own work. Velasquez began to walk through the jab and he took Burgos to the ropes and landed a crippling left hook to the body that dropped Burgos who was counted out. It was almost five minutes before Burgos was able to get up. The 29-year-old 5'2 ½" (159cm) "Pancora" was making the second defence of the WBA Fedebol title this year and makes it twelve wins in a row. Colombian Burgos is 3-3 in his last six fights with all three losses by KO/TKO.

**Olavinlinna, Finland: Light Edis Tatli (31-2) W PTS 12 Frank Urquiaga (12-1). Heavy: Robert Helenius (27-2) W PTS 6 Yury Bykhautsou (10-17-3). Super Bantam: Jose Antonio Sanchez (9-0-1) W PTS 8 Jose Hernandez (4-27-1,2ND). Tatli vs. Urquiaga**

Tatli retains the European title but is given a tougher time than expected by Peruvian-born Urquiaga. Tatli made a confident start making good use of his longer reach to score with jabs over the first two rounds. Urquiaga began to roll from the third but already the attention from Tatli's jab had started a swelling by his right eye. Despite this Urquiaga was able to get through with some good short punches and the fight warmed-up and produced some exciting exchanges as Tatli was throwing more short punches of his own. Urquiaga pressed hard over the middle rounds

scoring well to the body. Tatli was landing some hard uppercuts but Urquiaga was just a bit busier. The pace seemed to tell on Urquiaga but they both landed some quality punches in the seventh and eighth. Urquiaga had never been in a fight scheduled for more than eight rounds before and he tired over the last three rounds. He did enough to make the tenth close but Tatli knowing the fight was close edged the last two rounds and retained his title. Scores 116-112, 116-114 and 115-113 for Tatli. The 30-year-old Kosovon-born Finn was making the first defence of the title in his second spell as champion. He lost a majority verdict to Richar Abril for the WBA title in 2014 but recovered from that to beat the current WBC No 1 Yvon Mendy in 2015 to win the vacant European title. Things were going along well until he lost the European title to Francesco Patera in May last year but he regained the title with a win over Patera in December. He is rated IBF 4(3)/WBC 11 but with Mikey Garcia and Vasyl Lomachenko now lightweight title holders Tatli will find it difficult to get another title shot. On paper Urquiaga looked to be one of the weakest European title challengers for a long time and he only got the title shot because Marvin Petit pulled out last month with an injury. Despite that Urquiaga performed well above my expectations and was a very competitive challenger.

#### **Helenius vs. Bykhautsou**

Last time these two met Helenius won an unconvincing split decision. This time Helenius took a unanimous decision but it was a pedestrian effort. The scene was set from the opening round with Helenius on the back foot stabbing out his jab only for Bykhautsou to walk through the jab and take Helenius to the ropes. Helenius scored with short hooks as Bykhautsou moved in and tried to hold when they came together. Bykhautsou just kept padding forward looking dangerous with some wide swings and working the body inside. It was an insipid performance from Helenius who was never able to subdue or hurt Bykhautsou. He was the one landing the cleaner punches and deserved the decision but seems to be going backwards. Scores 60-55, 59-55 and 58-57. Helenius is No 7 with the EBU but a wide unanimous decision loss to Dillian Whyte in October killed off any hopes Helenius might have had of getting some big fights and the two performances against Bykhautsou have been poor. Belarusian Bykhautsou is now 1-9-1 in his last 11 fights.

#### **Sanchez vs. Hernandez**

A Spaniard based in Finland beats a Nicaraguan based in Spain, Sanchez boxed his way to victory in this one but Hernandez made him work hard. Sanchez was able to use his longer reach to keep popping jabs in Hernandez's face and he was quick and accurate. He was not loading up on his punches so Hernandez was able to march forward and press hard but the hand speed and movement of Sanchez foiled the Nicaraguan's attempts to get inside. Hernandez tried switching guards a few time but that made no difference and he was a very tired fighter by the final bell. Scores 80-72, 79-74 and 78-74 for Sanchez. He remains unbeaten but may lack the power to go much further. Now 16 losses in a row for Hernandez. Plenty of activity is the reward for being a reliable loser.

**Bernau, Germany: Welter: Rico Mueller (24-2-1) W PTS 8 Bethuel Ushona (36-6-1).** Neighbourhood favourite Mueller gets another win. The only official scoring here was the referee and he had Mueller a winner on a wide unanimous verdict scoring the fight 80-71 for Mueller. Fourth win for Mueller since losing to Jeff Horn in October 2016. Ushona's team screamed robbery. This was the Namibian's first fight for almost 14 months and he is now 2-3 in his last 5 fights.

**Accra, Ghana: Super Welter: Patrick Allotey (39-3) W PTS 12 Badru Lusambya (23-4-2). Super Middle: Emmanuel Martey (13-0) W TEC DEC 5 Sunday Ajuwa (13-4), Heavy: Richard Lartey Harrison (13-1) W TKO 2 Boniface Kabore (20-6). Super Welter: Justice Addy (16-4-1) W PTS 8 Daniel Aduku ((9-2-1). Super Middle: Emmanuel Quaye (2-8) W PTS 8 Eliasu Sulley (7-1). Super Feather: Alexis Kabore (28-3) W PTS 8 Samuel Akurugu.**

#### **Allotey vs. Lusambya**

Allotey retains the WBO African title with unanimous decision over Ugandan veteran Lusambya. It was too easy for Allotey but it was not an impressive performance. Lusambya rocked Allotey with a left in the first round but that was the full extent of his success as Allotey even did enough to win that round and won every round from there. Allotey took a while to get into his stride but then he dominated the fight with his jab and Lusambya was never really able to pose any threat. Allotey had Lusambya in trouble in the ninth but could not turn his superiority into a stoppage win which disappointed his local fans. Scores 120-108 twice and 120-109 all for Allotey. The 27-year-old Allotey was defending the WBO African title for the first time. He has won 9 of his last 10 fights with the defeat coming against world rated Kanat Islam in 2016. Former Commonwealth title challenger Lusambya, 35, was 5-1 in his last 6 fights.

#### **Martey vs. Ajuwa**

This one was decided on the scorecards after the fight was stopped due to cuts. Martey was in control most of the way. A clash of heads saw both fighters curt with Martey's cut looking worse. After five rounds it was decided that the respective cuts were too bad for the fight to continue so it went to the judges who all scored the fight to Martey 49-46 giving him the technical decision. Ghanaian champion Martey wins the vacant WBO African title. Martey was having his first fight since May last year and he needs to move up to some tougher opposition as he has beaten some very modest/poor fighters. Nigerian Ajuwa is now 1-3 in his last 4 fights.

#### **Harrison vs. Kabore**

Local heavyweight Harrison demolishes Kabore inside two rounds. Harrison came close to ending it in the first then crushed Kabore in the second. Harrison landed a brutal right uppercut followed by a left hook that put Kabore down. He barely beat the count and looked very shaky but was allowed to continue. Harrison battered Kabore to the canvas twice more but each time he just beat the count. When after the third knockdown the referee started to wipe Kabore's gloves looking to let the fight continue Kabore's second climbed the steps and the referee belatedly waived the fight over. The 6'5" Harrison collects the interim WBO African title with his tenth win

by KO/TKO but again very low level opposition so totally untested. Kabore from Burkina Faso came in as a very late substitute and is only a cruiserweight so much too small to pose any threat to Harrison as he gets his second second round loss in a row.

#### **Addy vs. Aduku**

Former Ghanaian super light champion Addy gets close unanimous decision over fellow-Ghanaian Aduku in the most competitive fight of the night. Scores 78-76 twice and 77-75 all for Addy who is 3-3 in his last 6 fights. Aduku had won his last three.

#### **Quaye vs. Sulley**

An upset here as Quaye gives favoured Sulley his first loss. Scores 79-72, 78-72 and 78-75. This was meant to pad out Sulley's record as they dragged Quaye out of retirement with his last fight being in 2012. Sulley's seven victims had just five wins between them.

#### **Kabore vs. Akurugu**

Burkina Faso's Kabore much too good for novice Akurugu and wins easy decision without losing a round. Scores 80-70, 80-71 and 80-72. After losing his first pro fight Kabore then won his next 25 before losing on points to Rey Vargas in 2016. Kabore suffered another loss last December being outpointed by Lodumo Lamati in South Africa.

**Ferrara, Italy: Welter: Nicola Cristofori (9-1-2) DREW 10 Tobia Giuseppe Loriga (29-8-3).** Local hero Cristofori holds on to the Italian title but only just. The champion, a tall southpaw made good use of his longer reach to work on the outside. He was quick and mobile building a lead and scoring with some good left counters in the fourth. Cristofori was on the floor in the fifth. Loriga landed a left but at the same time Cristofori slipped on the canvas so there was no count. Although the older man Loriga had more experience in pacing a fight and from the sixth he was storming forward into a tiring Cristofori who was running on empty over the last three rounds but made it to the bell, Scores 95-95 twice and 97-94 for Cristofori. First defence of the National title for 24-year-old Cristofori. Loriga, 47, a pro since 2003 and a former Italian super welter champion will be hoping for a return match.

#### **Hirakata, Japan: Welter: Ryota Yada (17-4) W TKO 7 Kazuyasu Okamoto (14-6).**

Yada makes successful defence of the Japanese title with stoppage of Okamoto; "Terminator" Yota seemed on his way to an early finish when he floored Okamoto with a right hook in the first. Okamoto did not cave in and Yada went off the boil and began to struggle. Former high level amateur Okamoto was jabbing well and in the sixth he had Yada shaken by a right. Yada finally broke through in the seventh rocking Okamoto heavily with a right. As Yada followed up Okamoto turned away and the referee stopped the fight. First defence of the National title for Yada who is 13-1 in his last 14 fights and has 14 wins by KO/TKO. The 5'10 ½" (179cm) Yada originally wanted to be a pro baseball player but is doing well enough as a boxer. Two losses in a row for Okamoto.



**Mexico City, Mexico: Fly: Martin Tecuapetla (14-9-4) W PTS 8 Dewayne Beamon (15-1-1). Super Bantam: Hugo Ruiz (37-4) W PTS 8 Dennis Contreras (20-10-1).**

#### **Tecuapetla vs. Beamon**

Late substitute Tecuapetla takes away the "0" from Beamon's record with a split decision. This was eight rounds of war. Beamon was by far the classier and over the early rounds he was getting through with fast jab and scoring with left hooks and straight rights. Tecuapetla just kept walking through the punches and focusing on the body. Both fighters landed and took some heavy stuff with Beamon's speed and movement giving him the edge. Gradually the body work from Tecuapetla began to tell as Beamon was being forced to stand and trade more. He still looked to be in front until Tecuapetla had him in trouble with a series of body punches in the seventh and the local fighter just had that bit more in the last with Beamon being forced to hold to try to weather the storm. Scores 77-75 twice for Tecuapetla and 77-73 for Beamon but a case could be made for either fighter winning. Tecuapetla was a modest looking 3-4-3 going in but three of those losses were a majority decision against Milan Melindo, a split decision to Akira Yaegashi and a ten round decision against current WBC fly champion Cristofer Rosales and one of the draws was against Maximino Flores so plenty of experience against top level, opposition. At 33 Beamon can't afford setbacks. He has beaten some experienced opposition and can come again but cannot leave it too late.

#### **Ruiz vs. Contreras**

Former WBC super bantam and interim WBA bantam champion Ruiz has his first fight for almost two years and outpoints Contreras. Ruiz was in cruise control as he overcame a slow start to build a lead. He boxed conservatively aware that Contreras had scored 19 of his wins by KO/TKO. Ruiz changed his tactics when he was cut and forced the fight more looking to finish the fight early. He did not manage that but he was a clear winner. Scores 79-73 twice and 80-72 for Ruiz. After losing in an exciting scrap with Julio Ceja for the interim WBC super bantam title in 2015 Ruiz won the full title by stopping Ceja in just 51 seconds in 2016. Later in the year he lost the title to Hozumi Hasegawa. Contreras won his first 15 fights but it has been mainly downhill from there.

**San Pedro, Philippines: Light Fly: Edward Heno (13-0-5) W PTS 12 Jesse Espinas (19-3).** OPBF champion Heno retains the title with unanimous verdict over fellow Filipino Espinas. Heno took charge early in this all-southpaw contest with his strong, accurate jab but Espinas was always competitive, always trying to take the fight to the champion but paying for that by shipping hard hooks from Heno on the way in. It was a fast-paced open fight because Heno wanted it that way with Espinas more effective inside. Heno was confident enough to drop and open his arms at times inviting Espinas to do his worst but Heno was too quick for Espinas to be able to take advantage of Heno's arrogance and confidence. Neither fighter is a big puncher so neither fighter was in any real trouble but they both had spells of domination but with Heno usually getting the better of the exchanges and a clear

winner. Scores 118-110, 117-111 and 116-112. Second defence of the title by 25-year-old from Baguio City. After winning the OPBF title with a victory over Seita Ogido in September last year Heno was quickly stripped off the title for refusing to make a title defence at the OPBF Convention in November. It was stated that this was part of the deal for the OPBF sanctioning the Seita fight. However Heno refused to fight at the Convention. His management claimed they had negotiated for the Seita fight through an intermediary and were not aware of that stipulation and that November would be too soon after the September contests. Two other fighters were approached to fight for the vacant title but both declined so Heno was reinstated. Five draws in 18 fights is a very high proportion and Heno has had a strange time with draws. His first three pro fights all ended in draws and all five of his draws have been majority draws. Heno is rated WBC 8/WBA 9/WBO 9/IBF 13(12). Philippines champion "Little Giant" Espinas had won his last eight fights including a win in Thailand over 32-0 Paipharob which earned him a world rating.

**Phoenix, AZ, USA: Heavy: Trevor Bryan (20-0) W TKO 4 BJ Flores (34-4-1).**

Bryan wins the vacant WBA interim title. The blatant manipulation to get Bryan and Flores into high spots in the WBA ratings convinced no one and in what may be a first for modern boxing not a single TV company bothered to show a heavyweight title fight. The outcome showed what a farce this was. After taking the first two rounds Bryan floored the 39-year-old Flores three times in the third round and three more in the fourth before the stoppage. The above does not include Flores going down at the end of the third from a punch landed after the bell. The 28-year-old Bryan got the job done and joins Anthony Joshua and Manuel Charr as WBA heavyweight champions. The WBA and in fact all of the sanctioning bodies, obviously do not possess a dictionary which could explain what the word "interim" means as they seem ignorant of the definition of terms they use. The 6'4" Bryan makes it 14 wins by KO/TKO. He was a top level amateur but he is still very much an unknown quantity as he has had only had two fight in the last two years against opponents with combined records of 4-44. We can only judge him when he finally meets a "name" fighter. Flores has lost big fights at cruiserweight against Danny Green for the IBO title, Beibut Shumenov for the secondary WBA title and in three rounds to Tony Bellew for the WBC title in 2016. In 2017 he beat two fighters with combined records of 39-24-3 and had not had a fight since June 2017. Everything about this fight was wrong and it is no surprise that Don King was involved. Something about leopards and spots comes to mind as boxing shoots itself in the foot again.

**Hollywood, CA, USA: Feather: Joseph Diaz (27-1) W PTS 12 Jesus M Rojas (26-2-2,1ND) W .Super Light: Jonathan Navarro (15-0) W TKO 7 Damon Allen (15-1-1). Super Welter: Ferdinand Kerobyan (10-0) W PTS 6 Jose Rivera (6-4).**

**Diaz vs. Rojas**

How can you have a title fight where the challenger can't win the title and the champion can't lose it? Diaz failed to make the weight so even if he won he would

not become champion and since Diaz was overweight under WBA rules even if Rojas lost he remained champion. If the title is not at stake then it is not a title fight but everybody paid to see a title fight and TV advertised a title fight and importantly the WBA don't get a sanction fee for non-title fights so it is a title fight-even if it isn't. To be honest the champion retaining his title does seem fair to me as it would just not be right for the champion to lose his title in a fight against someone who by not making the weight would not be eligible to fight for the title. So Diaz wins but Rojas remains the holder of the secondary WBA title.

Rojas was strong in the opening round walking forward banging to the body with both hands but Diaz ended the round with some hard body punches of his own. In the second Diaz was spearing Rojas with his right jab and scoring with hooks. Although Rojas was able to work to the body he was eating jabs on the way in. The third saw the fighters going toe-to-toe for much of the round. Rojas was focusing on the body with right hooks with Diaz switching from head to body with short, accurate bursts of punches. Rojas rolled forward in the fourth with his arms pumping but many of the punches were being blocked by Diaz. Over the last two minutes Diaz was stabbing his jab home and landing clubbing punches. The fifth went in phases. Rojas worked Diaz over on the ropes early only for Diaz to make space and rattle punches through the champion's guard over the middle of the round with Rojas pinning Diaz to the ropes with body punches at the bell. Rojas stayed on top of Diaz throughout the sixth bullying Diaz around and pounding away with hooks and uppercuts with Diaz not finding the room he needed to counter. Diaz took the seventh. He stayed off the ropes, boxed on the outside slotting home jabs and whacking Rojas with flurries of hooks and uppercuts. The eighth was a two phase round with Rojas steaming forward pounding to the body until Diaz started to fire flashing combinations of anywhere between four and ten punches. He had Rojas pinned to the ropes but when Diaz stepped back Rojas gestured him to come back inside and fight. The ninth was a brawl from bell to bell. It looked at times as though the sheer quantity of hooks and uppercuts from Rojas might overwhelm Diaz until Diaz again came to life with slashing combinations. Diaz had a swelling on his right cheek, was bleeding from the nose and had twice lost his gumshield but it was his flashing combinations that were catching the eye. Diaz simply outboxed Rojas in the tenth. He stayed in ring centre raking Rojas with jabs and a succession of hooks and uppercuts with Rojas unable to get close enough to do any useful work. The eleventh was closer but again it was Diaz doing the more visible scoring with many of the body punches from Rojas being blocked. Diaz stayed out of trouble in the last. Rojas was still marching forward but had slowed and could not pin Diaz down long enough to stage a big finish and Diaz came out a clear winner. Scores 117-111, 116-112 and 115-113 all for Diaz. "JoJo" Diaz, 25, has said that despite his failure to make the weight he still sees his future at featherweight. He lost a unanimous decision to Gary Russell for the WBC title less than three months ago but will get a shot at another title next year for sure. Rojas had been upgraded from interim champion to secondary champion (if that is a promotion?) by the WBA and having survived with his title intact will be hoping for a shot at the real champion Leo Santa Cruz.

### **Navarro vs. Allen**

Navarro's power proves too much for Allen in this clash of unbeaten fighters. Both contestants were letting their hands go early and landing some hard shots. Allen was more mobile with Navarro a bit flat-footed but showing some clever upper body movement. Allen outscored Navarro in the first and second but Navarro had Allen hurt the third. Both had handicaps, Navarro was cut over his left eye in a clash of heads in the third and Allen lost a point for low blows, Allen was quicker and took the fourth but was staggered by a couple of left hooks and a right to the head before banging back strongly at the end of the round. Allen fought on the outside using his jab more and scoring with straight rights in the fifth. As the sixth was coming to an end Allen had Navarro under pressure and bombarding him with punches when a chopping right counter sent Allen stumbling back badly shaken and as the bell went he went from staggering to falling heavily to the canvas. He made it to his feet and weaved his way unsteadily to his corner with the referee not giving Allen a count as he ruled the punch had landed after the bell.. Navarro walked Allen down in the seventh and after Navarro landed two big head punches the referee jumped in just as Allen sunk to the floor. Californian Navarro, 22, gets his eighth win by KO/TKO. No names on his record yet but he showed here he is ready to step up. Allen, 25, who competed at the US Trials for the 2012 Olympics, had scored wins over experienced opponents in Gamaliel Diaz and Martin Honorio but this was a brutal loss.

### **Kerobyan vs. Jose Rivera**

Armenian youngster Kerobyan steamrollers Rivera on his way to decision. Kerobyan was too strong for Rivera and he was marching forward over the full six rounds. He was able to get inside and bang away to body and head with strong hooks and uppercuts inside. Southpaw Rivera showed a good jab and never looked like folding under the pressure but never looked like winning as Kerobyan's power kept Rivera on the back foot and on the defensive. Scores 60-54 for Kerobyan on all three cards. The 20-year-old Californian-based Kerobyan looks a strong fighter and is worth watching. Rivera keeps his record of not losing inside the distance.

**Philadelphia, PA, USA: Super Middle: Derrick Webster (27-1) W TKO 8 Les Sherrington (37-11).** Webster halts Australian Sherrington in eight. Webster made a bright start shaking Sherrington with a series of punches in the first but the visitor steadied himself and had a good second round. A low punch from Sherrington saw Webster given some recovery time and from there Webster went onto the back foot using his height and reach to outscore Sherrington at distance. Whilst that was a sensible approach from the 6'4" New Jersey southpaw it did not make for an exciting fight and the crowd kept asking for more action. Sherrington had some good spells and landed some crisp body punches and looked to have hurt Webster with a right in the eighth. Webster fired back and forced Sherrington to go down one knee under a cluster of punches. Sherrington made it to his feet but when the eight count was over Webster landed a bunch of punches which sent Sherrington down again and the fight was stopped. The 36-year-old from New Jersey had a 19-bout winning run

ended in 2015 when he was floored and lost a wide decision to unbeaten Arif Magomedov. He has won eight fights since then but he needs to step up soon if he is going to get anywhere in his career. Queenslander Sherrington, 36, a former Australian and World Boxing Foundation champion has reached a stage where his career is running down.

**Fight of the week:** Nothing spectacular but I go for Joseph Diaz vs. Jesus Rojas with honourable mentions to Edis Tatli vs. Frank Urquiaga and Martin Tecuapetla vs. Dewayne Beamon

**Fighter of the week:** Joseph Diaz

**Punch of the week:** The Juan Carlos Rivera rib buster left hook that ended his fight with Luis Hinojosa with honourable mention to the right uppercut from Richard Lartey Harrison which effectively destroyed Boniface Kabore

**Upset of the week:** Ricardo Espinoza's win over world rated Daniel Lozano and substitute Martin Tecuapetla's win over previously unbeaten Dewayne Beamon

**One to watch:** 22-year-old Puerto Rican Jean Carlos Rivera 15-0 10 wins by KO/TKO