

## The Past Week in Action 26 February 2019

### Highlights:

- Chris Eubank Jr outpoints James DeGale in IBO super middle title fight
- Anthony Dirrell gets technical verdict over Avni Yildirim for the vacant WBC super middle title
- Humberto Soto gets upset victory over Brandon Rios
- Lee Selby returns with a win but again suffers cuts
- Joe Joyce halts Bermane Stiverne in six rounds
- Blake Caparello, Tony Luis, Byron Rojas, Jamal James and Jeison Rosario get wins.

### WORLD TITLE/MAJOR SHOWS

#### February 23

London, England: Super Middle: Chris Eubank Jr (28-2) W PTS 12 James DeGale (25-3-1). Light: Lee Selby (27-2) W PTS 12 Omar Douglas (19-3). Heavy: Joe Joyce (8-0) W TKO 6 Bermane Stiverne (25-4-1). Light Heavy: Andre Sterling (10-0) W PTS 10 Ricky Summers (15-2). Super Feather: Anthony Cacace (17-1) W PTS 8 Alan Luques (26-8).

#### DeGale vs. Eubank

Eubank takes unanimous verdict over DeGale to win the vacant IBO title

#### Round 1

A cautious round early as both pawed with their jab. DeGale was the more positive as the action warmed-up following his southpaw jabs with lefts. Eubank was looking to counter the advancing DeGale with rights but DeGale just did enough to take the round.

**Score: 10-9 DeGale**

#### Round 2

Eubank was firing rights in the second and connecting. He landed a couple which sent DeGale tumbling along the ropes to a corner and DeGale went down sitting on them lower ropes trying to get under the punches. He was up quickly and not seriously hurt. After the count Eubank pressed hard trying to land more big rights but DeGale boxed

and held and was not troubled again in the round except for a clash of heads that saw him cut over his left eye.

**Score: 10-8 Eubank**

**Eubank 19-18**

### **Round 3**

This was a close round with too many clinches. DeGale was throwing a couple of jabs and then darting inside and clinching. Eubank was looking to score with right hand counters but was having trouble timing DeGale's diving attacks. Eubank landed a hard right and just had just the edge.

**Score: 10-9 Eubank**

**Eubank 29-27**

### **Round 4**

A disappointing round. It was punch, clinch, punch, clinch all the way. DeGale scored with a couple of useful jabs but Eubank ended the round strongly forcing DeGale to the ropes and landing with rights.

**Score: 10-9 Eubank**

**Eubank 39-36**

### **Round 5**

Eubank was on the front foot with DeGale circling and then diving in. At one point Eubank lifted DeGale and almost threw him over. DeGale was making no use at all of his jab and Eubank was stalking him and doing what clear scoring there was.

**Score: 10-9 Eubank**

**Eubank 49-45**

### **Round 6**

DeGale had a better round. He was using his jab more and scoring from distance rather than diving in. Eubank continued to prowl after DeGale but did not land much.

**Score: 10-9 DeGale**

**Eubank 58-55**

### **Round 7**

Pressure all the way from Eubank. DeGale was showing some nice defensive work but Eubank was the one landing punches as he fired home a series of hooks.

**Score: 10-9 Eubank**

**Eubank 68-64**

### **Round 8**

Another round for Eubank. DeGale was just sticking out a jab and then diving inside and not working when he got there. Eubank chased in vain for much of the round but then drove DeGale across the ring with a series of punches.

**Score: 10-9 Eubank**

**Eubank 78-73**

### **Round 9**

Eubank opened this round by scoring with a succession of jabs and hooks. DeGale connected with a couple of sharp hooks but as the round progressed Eubank was again the one landing as he had success with his hooks

**Score: 10-9 Eubank**

**Eubank 88-82**

#### **Round 10**

DeGale scored first in this round with a couple of sharp punches but then went back to his punch and dive forward tactics, The fight was untidy with no sustained action. Eubank took over and drove forward. He staggered DeGale with a left hook and then drove DeGale across the ring raining punches with DeGale going down. DeGale was up straight away complaining he had been pushed down but was given a count and the bell went when the count was completed.

**Score: 10-8 Eubank**

**Eubank 98-90**

#### **Round 11**

The eleventh was another round with too many clinches. A frustrated Eubank lifted DeGale on his shoulder and threw him to the canvas and the referee deducted a point from Eubank. DeGale connected with a couple of lefts but Eubank stormed forward chasing a tired DeGale scoring with uppercuts and a left to the head to give him the round.

**Score (10-9 Eubank) with the deduction 9-9**

**107-99**

#### **Round 12**

Eubank stormed through the last round going forward throwing punches. DeGale countered when he could but over the closing seconds he was being forced to the ropes from hooks by Eubank.

**Score: 10-9 Eubank**

**117-108**

**Official Scores: 117-109, 115-112 and 114-112 all for Eubank**

Commanding performance by Eubank perhaps his best as a pro. Where next is the question now so we have to wait and see. DeGale will be looking at his options but he has already had an outstanding career and retirement would be a smart decision.

#### **Selby vs. Douglas**

Selby outpoints a determined Douglas but again suffers badly from cuts. Douglas clearly thought this was a fight he could win and he made a strong start. Selby seemed to just take the first round but Douglas put himself in front by taking the second and third. To make things even worse for Selby a clash of heads in the second round saw him emerge

with a cut over his right eye. He had been badly cut in losing his IBF title to Josh Warrington so it was a bad sign that he was cut so early and when a clash of heads in the third opened a cut over his left eye things looked bad for Selby. Undismayed Selby showed champions determination and used his customary speed and skill to get back into the fight and outboxed Douglas over the fourth and fifth. Douglas fought his way back into the fight with a strong sixth but then Selby took over again and with the cuts being held in check he took control and built a winning lead. Douglas put in a big effort in the twelfth but by then it was already Selby's fight. Scores 116-112 twice and 115-113 all for Selby. The Welshman wins the IBF Inter-Continental title. Once the cuts heal he will be looking to work his way to a world title shot. Douglas' progress was derailed by consecutive losses in fights against Javier Fortuna and Edner Cherry but he recorded a good win in August by decisioning 26-2-1 Haskell Rhodes

### **Joyce vs. Stiverne**

Joyce stops a vastly overweight Stiverne. The key measure as to how hard a fight this would be for Joyce was Stiverne's weight. Had he trained hard and would he be a real threat as Don King claimed or had his road work consisted of running to and from the nearest McDonald's. He came in 20lbs heavier than when he fought both Derric Rossy in 2015 and Deontay Wilder in his last bout in November 2017 and right there you knew he was never going to pose a threat to Joyce. He would give the unbeaten fighter a few rounds against his most experienced opponent to date-but nothing more. Joyce bossed the opening round. He was using a strong jab and hooking to the body with Stiverne on the retreat, Stiverne found the target with some rights but Joyce took them well and continued to belabour Stiverne with lefts and right. Stiverne tried to come forward in the second and threw some rights. From the half way point it was one-sided with Joyce walking forward pounding Stiverne with lefts and rights hooks and uppercuts with very little coming back from Stiverne. A couple of left hooks and a right to the head floored Stiverne early in the third but he was up quickly and carried on. It really was just target practice for Joyce with only the occasional attempt at a counter from Stiverne who already looked exhausted. More punishment for Stiverne in the fourth. His only effort was the occasional wild swipe with his right. Joyce could not miss him with a jab and over the late part

of the round was content to land a jab and then take a step back and then land another jab, It was that easy for him. Joyce pounded away at Stiverne in the fifth with Stiverne more of a pacifist than a pugilist and in the sixth with Joyce rocking Stiverne time and again with head punches the referee stopped the fight. It was so one-sided that it could have been stopped at any time from the third round onwards. Joyce retains the Commonwealth title and wins the WBA gold title although the status of the newly invented WBA title is obscure. The 6'6" Joyce has won all of his fights inside the distance and again he demonstrated his power particularly with his damaging jab. Going in he was rated No 5 by the WBA. There is talk that Joyce will fight Manuel Charr the holder of the WBA secondary title. It seems that the mandated fight between Charr and Fres Oquendo is no longer mandated which would conveniently open the door for Joyce to fight Charr. It was obvious Stiverne came for the money and his "effort" was pathetic. Joyce did his job but the fact that Stiverne is a former world champion does not change the fact that for this fight he was a flabby 40-year-old who had not fought for over 14 months and had spent less than one minute in the ring in over three years.

### **Sterling vs. Summers**

Sterling gets off the floor to outpoint Summers in British title eliminator. Summers just edged the first round and then floored Sterling with a right in the second. Sterling got up and survived and then dominated the fight. Summers was cut over his right eye in the third and Sterling swept that round and the next four. Summers rallied to take the eighth but Sterling took over again and won the ninth and tenth. Scores 97-92 twice and 97-93. Good win for the 28-year-old BBC of C Southern Area champion. Summers only previous loss was on points against Frank Buglioni for the British title in 20127 when coming in as a late substitute.

### **Cacace vs. Luques**

Cacace returns with a win. The Belfast southpaw showed no early signs of ring rust as he was quicker and outworked Argentinian Luques. It was only very late in the fight as Cacace seemed to slow that Luques was competitive but Cacace was able to work his way to the end of the fight getting eight rounds of useful work on the ledger. Referee's score 79-74 for Cacace. The Belfast man lost to Martin Joseph Ward for the British title in July 2017 and then had a fight in December 2017 so this is his

first fight for 14 months. He will look to get some more rounds under his belt and then go again for a title. Luques is the South American champion. He was 7-1 before this fight with the loss being on points against Diego De La Hoya.

**Minneapolis, MN, USA: Super Middle: Anthony Dirrell (33-1-1) W TEC DEC 10 Avni Yildirim (21-2). Welter: Jamal James (25-1) W RTD 6 Janer Gonzalez (19-2-1). Middle: Jeison Rosario (18-1-1) W RTD 9 Mark Hernandez (13-3-1). Welter: Bryant Perrella (16-2) W PTS 8 Breidis Prescott (31-16). Heavy: Efetobor Apochi (7-0) W TKO 2 Ray Ochieng (26-23-3).**

### **Dirrell vs. Yildirim**

Dirrell wins the vacant WBC title with technical decision over Turkey's Avni Yildirim in a total war.

#### **Round 1**

Yildirim made a strong start forcing Dirrell to the ropes with jabs and landing clubbing rights. Dirrell was on the back foot using his longer reach to spear Yildirim with jabs and slipping home left hooks and uppercuts. A flurry of punches from Yildirim got through and that sparked Dirrell into forcing Yildirim back with a couple of head-snapping uppercuts and then Dirrell used his jab to take the round

**Score: 10-9 Dirrell**

#### **Round 2**

An already entertaining fight was even more entertaining in the second as they stood and traded jabs, hooks and uppercuts. Yildirim forced Dirrell to the ropes and again both fired fast accurate shots. Yildirim worked strongly with his jabs and lefts to the body and although Dirrell landed a sharp uppercut it was Yildirim's round.

**Score: 10-9 Yildirim**

**Tied 19-19**

#### **Round 3**

After a quiet start to the round Yildirim piled on the pressure coming in behind a strong jab and lading overhand rights and lefts to the body. Dirrell was scoring with accurate counters and quick bursts of punches and scored with a long heavy right to the head to take a very close round

**Score: 10-9 Dirrell**

**Dirrell 29-28**

#### **Round 4**

It was war again as Yildirim kept Dirrell on the ropes for the whole three minutes. Dirrell was landing some scorching counters inside but Yildirim kept working banging lefts to the body and rights to the head to take the round.

**Score: 10-9 Yildirim**

**Tied 38-38**

#### **Round 5**

Dirrell boxed more in this one. He was still circling the perimeter of the ring with Yildirim walking him down but he was slotting punches through Yildirim's guard and when they did start to trade heavy stuff again Dirrell was just that bit more accurate.

**Score: 10-9 Dirrell**

**Dirrell 48-47**

#### **Round 6**

Dirrell raked the advancing Yildirim with hooks and uppercuts at the start of the round. Yildirim did better when he closed then distance and connected with clubbing lefts and rights. Dirrell was straying low with some of his hooks and Yildirim just did enough to take the round.

**Score 10-9 Yildirim**

**Tied 57-57**

#### **Round 7**

Best round so far for Dirrell. He stayed off the ropes and the speed and accuracy of his punches had Yildirim backing up. Inside Dirrell was landing wicked right hooks and cracking uppercuts but a clash of heads opened a cut over the left eye of Dirrell.

**Score: 10-9 Dirrell**

**Dirrell 67-66**

#### **Round 8**

Three minutes of pressure from Yildirim. It was close work all the way. Dirrell scored with sharp accurate and a few low punches but Yildirim kept pressing and landed a series of hard thudding head punches from both hands. Dirrell's cut was worsening and Yildirim was cut on his nose.

**Score: 10-9 Yildirim**

**Tied 76-76**

#### **Round 9**

Dirrell looked to be tiring but Yildirim did not. He kept piling forward pushing out his punches with Dirrell throwing less and holding more. Dirrell was given another warning for a low punch and was under pressure at the bell.

**Score: 10-9 Yildirim**

**Yildirim 86-85**

#### **Round 10**

Dirrell danced and boxed his way in this one. He was not looking to trade but instead speared Yildirim from distance. When Yildirim rushed forward head down Dirrell side-stepped and mimicked being a matador to Yildirim's bull. With a minute to go in the round the referee stopped the action to let the doctor examine Dirrell's cut and the doctor recommended the fight be stopped. Yildirim climbed on the ropes to celebrate his victory only to be told it would be decided on the scorecards with the tenth round being scored.

**Score: 10-9 Dirrell**

**Tied 95-95**

**Official Scores: 96-94 twice for Dirrell and 98-92 for Yildirim.**

The 24-year-old "Dog" becomes WBC champion for the second time. When he held the title previously he lost it in his first defence against Badou Jack but he will be aiming to keep the title a bit longer this time. I guess Dirrell's dream fight would be against Saul Alvarez-dream on Andre. Yildirim showed considerable improvement from his losing effort against Chris Eubank Jr in an IBO title fight in 2017 and he looked to be the stronger man when this one was stopped so his team will push for a rematch.

**James vs. Gonzalez**

Fighting in front of his home fans James gets inside the distance win and hopes to get into the welter mix and a place at the top table. Plenty of action in this one. James had a good opening round forcing Gonzalez onto the back foot and scoring to the body. The second was close with Gonzalez connecting with stiff jabs and a cut was opened under James' right eye. With Jones being 6'2" Gonzalez had to push forward and he had some success to the body in the third with James countering well. In the fourth and the fifth James had the better of the exchanges particularly with long rights. Gonzalez was down early in the sixth but it was due to their legs getting in a tangle and there was no count. Later in the round a right from James floored Gonzalez heavily. He beat the count and survived the remaining seconds but did not come out for the seventh round. Now 13 wins by KO/TKO for James. After a run of good wins James lost a unanimous decision to Yordenis Ugas in 2016. He has rebuilt well with six wins including victories over Ionut Dan Ion, Diego Chaves and Abel Ramos and is No 3 with the WBA. Colombian Gonzalez was 19-0-1 against very modest opposition but after losing in



his last fight against Russian Radzhab Butaev in November 2017 that is two defeats in a row.

### **Rosario vs. Hernandez**

When these two clashed a year ago it was over six rounds and ended in a split draw. This time Dominican Rosario made sure the judges were not needed. The fight was close to the end with Rosario's power the deciding factor. After a close first round they began to trade heavy punches in the second with Hernandez doing most of the scoring. A low punch in the third saw Hernandez get some recovery time and Rosario get a warning. The action continued hot over the next four rounds and it was hard to split them. Rosario's heavier punch saw Hernandez under pressure in the eighth. Rosario was dominating the ninth and floored Hernandez with a powerful left hook. Hernandez made it to his feet but a fierce attack from Rosario saw the referee step in and stop the fight. The 23-year-old Rosario suffered his only defeat when he was floored three times and stopped by Nathaniel Gallimore in 2017. He has rebounded in style with victories over Justin DeLoach and Jamontay Clark and is rated 11(10) by the IBF. Fresno's "Madman" Hernandez was 4-0-1 in his last 5 fights.

### **Perrella vs. Prescott**

Tall Floridian southpaw Perrella gets back into action with unanimous decision over regular loser Prescott. Scores 79-73 twice and 78-74. After defeat by Yordenis Ugas in September 2016 Perrella did not fight again until December 2017. In his sole fight last year he took a big step up by facing Luis Collazo but lost on a majority verdict. This is his first fight since that August loss and hopefully he will be more active. Prescott has now won only one of his last nine fights so looks a reliable loser.

### **Apochi vs. Ochieng**

Nigerian Apochi blows away another opponent as he makes progress under the radar. His second round stoppage of Kenyan Ochieng makes it seven inside the distance wins in seven outings all scored inside three rounds. At 5'11" and just over 200lbs the cruisers are where he should fight. The Houston-based 31-year-old is a former Captain of the Nigerian boxing team. He was twice runner-up at the All-African Championships and beat world rated Jai Opetaiia at the 2014 Commonwealth Games on his way to a bronze medal. He also fought at the World Championships and was a member of the Mexican Guerreros team in the World Series

of Boxing. At 31 time is not in his corner and he needs to face much better opposition before any judgment can be made on how far he can go. Ochieng, 42, suffers his sixth loss in a row.

## **February 22**

**Melbourne, Australia: Light Heavy: Blake Caparello (29-3-1) W PTS 10 Reagan Dessaix (16-2). Super Welter: Joel Camilleri (17-5-1) W RTD 5 Billy Limov (4-1-1).**

### **Caparello vs. Dessaix**

Caparello wins close unanimous decision over younger Dessaix. Caparello took the fight to Dessaix in the opening round getting past the guard of the 6'3" from Brisbane. Dessaix had a better second as he started to settle into the fight but Caparello was finding the range with his southpaw lefts in the third. Dessaix swung the fight back his way with a good fourth and finished the fifth with a strong attack. Dessaix looked to have outworked Caparello in the sixth. The seventh was a close round but Dessaix appeared to have done enough to take the eighth, After that Dessaix, who had not gone ten rounds before, seemed to tire allowing Caparello to edge in front but it was very close. Score 97-93 twice and 96-94 all for Caparello. He lifts Dessaix's WBA Oceania title but for the Australian No 1 the win was everything as a loss here would have probably signalled the end of the 32-year-old former WBO title challenger's hopes of any more big fights. Dessaix, 22, will recover quickly from this and looks a very good bet for the future

### **Camilleri vs. Limov**

Camilleri lifts the vacant Australian title with victory over novice Limov. Camilleri put Limov down in the first and Limov only just made it to the bell. Camilleri continued to connect with heavy punches in the second, third and fourth with Limov taking the punishment and trying to fight back. Camilleri floored Limov again in the fifth and at the end of the round Limov's team pulled him out of the fight. Camilleri goes to 8-1-1 in his last 10 fights and has eight wins by KO/TKO. New Zealand-born Queensland State champion Limov never really got into the fight after the first round knockdown.

**Budakalasz, Hungary: Cruiser: Imre Szello (23-0) W KO 2 Denis Simcic (32-4-1). Super Welter: Roman Zakirov (9-0) W PTS 10 Daniel**

**Vega Cota (13-3-1). Super Middle: Mate Kiss (14-0-2 ) W KO 2  
Hussein Itaba (5-3-2). Light Heavy: Oscar Ahlin (17-2) W TKO 4  
Beka Mukhulishvili (6-5).**

### **Szello vs. Simcic**

In the first show of the year in Hungary Szello brushes aside an out of condition Simcic inside two rounds. Szello was looking to end this early and handled Simcic's attempts to attack easily and then put Simcic down and out just a few seconds before the bell at the end of the second round. The 35-year-old "Imo" has scored six inside the distance wins in his last seven fights and despite never facing a rated opponent is No 2 with the WBO. Szello was a great amateur but to put him above fighters such Murat Gassiev, Mairis Breidis, Yuniel Dorticos and Andrew Tabiti is ridiculous- but then the WBO No 1 is 48-year-old Firat Arslan! Szello is No 12 in the EBU ratings. Slovenian Simcic, 37, had just one fight in 2015, one in 2016 was inactive in 2017 and had just one fight in 2018 beating a guy with 86 losses so no risk being taken here.

### **Zakirov vs. Cota**

Russian boxer Zakirov wins the vacant IBO International title with unanimous verdict over southpaw Cota. This was an entertaining fight and although Zakirov was stronger, more accurate in his work and a clear winner Cota was always competitive until he tired but always second best. Scores 99-91 twice and 98-92 for Zakirov. First ten round fight and first title for the Azeri-based 22-year-old. Mexican Cota was having his first fight outside Mexico and also his first ten rounder.

### **Kiss vs. Itaba**

Kiss dismantles Tanzanian novice Itaba in two rounds. Kiss was able to walk through the 6'1" Itaba and he floored the African late in the first before putting him down and out half way through the second. The 25-year-old Hungarian has ten wins by KO/TKO but this was an abysmal mismatch. Third loss by KO/TKO for poor Itaba

### **Ahlin vs. Mukhulishvili**

Swedish "Golden Boy" Ahlin gets his fourth win on the bounce by KO/TKO with stoppage of Georgian Mukhulishvili. Unexpected losses to Bernard Donfack and Patrick Mendy have taken the shine off the "Golden Boy" image but he is trying to regroup. Fourth loss in a row for Mukhulishvili and his first inside the distance defeat.

**Ekaterinburg, Russia: Light: Zaur Abdullaev (11-0) W TKO 10 Humberto Martinez (33-9-2). Heavy: Evgeny Romanov (12-0) W KO 1 Dillon Carman (14-4). Super Feather: Muhammadkhuja Yaqubov (13-0) W PTS 10 Emanuel Lopez (29-10-1). Super Welter: Magomed Kurbanov (17-0) W PTS 10 Damian Bonelli (23-6). Cruiser: Evgeny Tischenko (4-0) W PTS 8 Jose Ulrich (17-3,1ND).**

### **Abdullaev vs. Martinez**

Abdullaev gets late stoppage win against Martinez. Abdullaev was tracking the smaller Martinez around the ring in the first and put the Colombian down with a left hook to the body. Martinez made it to his feet just as the bell went. Abdullaev has an unusual humped style and is not a fast mover but has quick hands and good power. He continued stalking Martinez throughout the fight and did a good job of cutting the ring down and landed some hard straight rights. Martinez kept moving and was most effective when diving forward with hooks to the body. Abdullaev came close to finishing Martinez when he floored him with double left hooks in the fourth and then rocked him with a big combination later in the round. Over the second half of the fight Martinez stood and traded. Abdullaev was scoring with stiff jabs and long rights but Martinez took the punches and kept firing hooks. They stood toe-to-toe late in the seventh just punching away but Martinez had to absorb lots of punishment in the eighth and ninth. The exchanges were fairly even in the tenth until a series of uppercuts had Martinez shaky and a big right put him down. He beat the count and as Abdullaev bombarded him with punches Martinez looked shaky but just as he was punching back the referee stepped in and stopped the fight. The 24-year-old Russian scored a good win in outpointing Hank Lundy and this is his seventh win by KO/TKO. Martinez was 6-0-1 in his last 7 but against substandard opponents.

### **Romanov vs. Carman**

Romanov flattens "Big Country Carman in just 110 seconds. The 6'5" Carman towered over 6-0" tall Romanov but was forced to the ropes by rights to the head. He moved forward off the ropes but Romanov drove him back and then connected with a right and a left hook and Carman dropped to the floor on his hands and knees and was counted out. The 33-year-old Romanov gets his fifth inside the distance win in a row. In the amateurs after settling for three silver medals in consecutive Russian

Championships he finally won the national title in 2009. In the third round of a Russia vs. USA meeting in February 2008 he landed a big right which saw Deontay Wilder staggering badly forcing an eight count and then floored Wilder with another right. Wilder made it to his feet but was unsteady and the fight was stopped. That was a powerful Russian team with Artur Beterbiev and Sergey Kovalev both fighting at 81kgs and Rakhim Chakhkiev at 91kgs. Not surprisingly Russia won the match 8-2. Romanov was consistently by-passed for the big International Tournaments so retired from boxing in 2010 to work in local sports administration but returned to boxing in 2016 and turned professional. Former Canadian champion Carman scored a big domestic win last October when he knocked out unbeaten Simon Kean. All four of his losses have come inside the distance.

### **Yaqubov vs. Lopez**

Yaqubov outboxes Mexican Lopez in a fast-paced bout. The Tajik southpaw was quicker and more mobile than Lopez and was already finding the target with straight lefts in the first round. Lopez was looking to draw Yaqubov's lead and counter but he was waiting too long. Yaqubov continued to find the range with his lefts and worked the body well. Lopez was plodding forward but Yaqubov was too quick, too slick and too accurate for the visitor. He was rattling off combinations and moving too quickly for Lopez to counter. Lopez had some success coming forward in the fifth but as the fight progressed Yaqubov was beginning to put together precise and accurate five/six punch combinations and was outclassing the experienced Lopez. Yaqubov slowed a bit in the eighth and ninth but was still moving changing angles and doing the scoring speeding around Lopez bombarding him with rapid-fire fists in the last. Scores 100-90 for Yaqubov from the three judges. He was making the first defence of his WBC International title. Still only 23 he has tremendous skill, quick feet and flashing hands and outclassed the former interim WBA super feather champion. He looks certain to break into the world ratings this year. Lopez looked shop-worn and is now 2-4 in his last six fights.

### **Kurbanov vs. Bonelli**

Kurbanov just had too much power for Bonelli. He scored a first round knockdown and pressed hard all the way. Bonelli found plenty of gaps for counters but he is not enough of a puncher to threaten Kurbanov. A

left hook in the third had Bonelli hurt and the Argentinian was spending more and more time covering up on the ropes. Bonelli had a good sixth forcing Kurbanov back with quick attacks but was rocked by a right in the seventh. Bonelli's holding and ducking tactics saw a frustrated Kurbanov throw the Argentinian to the canvas twice in the eighth. A series of head punches floored Bonelli just before the bell in the ninth and he was down again in the tenth but lasted the full distance. There is nothing pretty about the style of the Russian "Black Lion" the 23-year-old Kurbanov is powerful, he loads up on every punch and leaves big gaps in his defence. It has worked for him against some good level opposition but his No 3 rating with the IBF is difficult to defend. Bonelli, 40, did well to get off the floor a few times and last the full ten rounds but he has now lost five in a row.

### **Tischenko vs. Ulrich**

Former amateur star Tischenko gets some rounds under his belt as he wins every round against Argentinian Ulrich. With Tischenko at 6'5" and Ulrich at 5'11" it was not much of a spectacle and Tischenko disappointed in not ending this early and had to settle for dominating every round. The 27-year-old Russian southpaw swept the board as an amateur winning gold at the Olympics, World Championships, European Championships, European Under 23, European Youth and Russian Championships. Ulrich, the Argentinian No 6 lost on a split decision for the national title in May but that is now three losses in a row for him.

**Cape Town, South Africa: Feather: Thembani Mbangatha (10-0) W PTS 10 Doctor Ntsele (22-12-1).** A gutsy Mbangatha overcomes injury to outpoint experienced Ntsele and retain his WBFederation African title. The local fighter was boxing well behind his jab and looked on the way to a comfortable victory until he dislocated his shoulder. That stirred Ntsele into upping his pace and he made some inroads into Mbangatha's lead but not enough to turn the fight his way. Scores 97-93 twice and 99-91 for "Baby Jake" Mbangatha. This is the second time the South African No 6 Mbangatha has suffered a dislocation of this shoulder in a fight. Former South African flyweight champion Ntsele has also fought for titles at bantam and super bantam and in his last fight before this one he was just inside the super feather limit.

**London, England: Welter: Freddy Kiwitt (15-2) W PTS 10 Paddy Gallagher (15-5).** In a close entertaining fight two knockdowns prove to be the deciding factor in Kiwitt's majority decision win over Belfast's Gallagher. The pattern of the fight saw Gallagher taking the fight to Kiwitt with the Liberian-born fighter boxing and countering. The rounds were close but just as Gallagher looked to be taking control in the fifth he was knocked down. The Belfast fighter battled back over the sixth and seventh and looked to have clawed back the 10-8 fifth round. He was forcing the fight in the eighth but Kiwitt was boxing well and the fight seemed to be put out of Gallagher's reach when he suffered a flash knockdown late in the round. Gallagher stormed forward in the ninth and tenth but Kiwitt stayed strong and countered well but it was close. Scores 96-94 and 95-93 for Kiwitt and 95-95. British-based Kiwitt wins the vacant WBO European title. His two losses have been to unbeaten fighters and he has won his last three fights. Gallagher had won 5 of his last 6 fights with the loss being a split decision against Brad Solomon in April last year in the WBC welterweight tournament that seems to have vanished without trace.

**Kissimmee, FL, USA: Super Light: Yomar Alamo (16-0) W PTS 10 Manuel Mendez (16-5-3). Middle: Carlos Monroe (12-0) W TKO 1 Jonathan Tavira (17-7). Bantam: Antonio Vargas (10-0) W TKO 2 Lucas Baez (34-18-5).**

#### **Alamo vs. Mendez**

Puerto Rican Alamo boxes his way to wide unanimous verdict over Mendez. Alamo won this one on the back foot. Mendez marched forward behind a high guard looking to hook to the body. Alamo stuck to the perimeter of the ring constantly moving. He speared the advancing Mendez with jabs and connected with hooks and uppercuts and moved again before Mendez could land anything. Alamo rocked Mendez with a right in the second but could not capitalise on that. A frustrated Mendez was throwing wild shots with Alamo having no trouble dodging them and making Mendez pay with counters. Mendez pressed all the way but never came close to catching Alamo with a punch of consequence as Alamo cruised to victory. Scores 99-91 twice and 100-90 for Alamo who wins the vacant WBO NABO title. Third defeat in a row for Mendez.

#### **Monroe vs. Tavira**

Monroe dismantles Travis inside a round. This one lasted just 91 seconds and gives 24-year-old Monroe his ninth win by KO/TKO. Mexican southpaw Taviro suffers his third inside the distance defeat in a row against unbeaten opposition with combined records of 47-0.

### **Vargas vs. Baez**

Vargas blows away Argentinian Baez inside two rounds. The former Olympian was much too good for Baez. Vargas put Baez down for the first time with a precise right uppercut and the second knockdown came as Vargas took a step back to dodge a couple of jabs from Baez and threw a straight right to the chin that floored Baez. He made it to his feet but wobbled and the referee stopped the fight. The 22-year-old Vargas, born in Houston of mixed Puerto Rican and Mexican heritage, gets his fourth win by KO/TKO. In 2015 he was voted US Elite Male Boxer of the Year after winning the US National championships, the National Golden Gloves and a gold medal at the Pan American Games but did not medal at the 2016 Olympics. Florida-based Baez drops to nine losses by KO/TKO.

**Huntington, NY, USA: Cruiser: Joel Tambwe Djeko (15-2-1) W PTS 10 Simone Federici (14-2-1)** Belgian “Big Joe” Djeko wins decision over Italian Federici. With “Big Joe” being just that the tactics were easy to predict. Federici had to pile forward usually leading with a right aiming for Djeko’s head but too often falling short of the towering Djeko’s chin. When he did get inside Federici pumped away with hooks and uppercuts. Djeko did not want to fight inside so was holding and smothering Federici’s attacks. At distance Djeko was scoring with strong jabs and punishing hooks and was a good winner. Scores 97-93 twice and 99-91 for Djeko who gets his sixth win on the trot. Former undefeated Italian champion “Tyson” Federici was 7-0-1 going into this one.

### **February 23**

**Tijuana, Mexico: Welter: Humberto Soto (69-9-2,1ND) W PTS 12 Brandon Rios (35-5-1). Bantam: Joel Cordova (8-4-2) W PTS 10 Jose Quirino (20-3-3). Light: Hector Tanajara (17-0) W TEC DEC 4 Ivan Delgado (13-2-2). Fly: Joselito Velasquez (8-0) W TKO 7 Kevin**



## **Villanueva (10-2-3). Middle: Diego Pacheco (2-0) W PTS 4 Alberto Aguilar**

Soto vs. Rios

Soto gives Rios a boxing lesson on the way to a convincing victory. Brilliant start by Soto. Rios was moving forward with jabs and hooks. Soto kept moving around Rios and then scoring with blazing combinations with fists too quick for Rios to block. Rios continued to force the fight looking to trap Soto on the ropes and work him over with hooks and uppercuts. Sometimes that worked but Rios was wide open and Soto was able to land heavily as Rios walked in. Even when Rios managed to take Soto to the ropes Soto would twist away and put Rios on the ropes and then rake Rios with a bunch of rapid combinations. Rios only had one pace and one plan so he kept rumbling onto Soto's punches aiming to get close enough to do some work of his own but Soto was only staying still long enough to rattle Rios with his punches and then moving leaving Rios to follow behind. Rios had some success over the second half of the fight as the pace caught up with the 38-year-old Soto but he was never able to pin Soto down long enough to get any sort of toe-hold in the fight and was out punched and outclassed by Soto. Scores 118-112 twice and 119-111 all for Soto. The former WBC super feather and light champion was considered to be semi-retired as he was inactive in 2017 and had not impressed in victories over two modest level fighters in 2018. He was tactically brilliant here so that may have given him the desire to try for one more title fight. Even if that does not happen he has had the pleasure of knowing that in beating Rios he is the first Mexican born fighter to defeat Rios after Rios had beaten all fifteen he had faced previously. Rios, 32, a former holder of the secondary WBA lightweight title, had a mixed 2018 being stopped in nine rounds by Danny Garcia but stopping Ramon Alvarez in November. No indication that he will do anything but continue his career but he was given a boxing lesson here.

### **Cordova vs. Quirino**

Minor upset as Cordova outpoints local favourite Quirino. These two had fought to a split draw in December and this one was also close with Cordova getting the split decision. This one was every bit as tight as after the early rounds went to southpaw Quirino Cordova dominated the middle rounds. Cordova forced the fight hard. Quirino was finding

himself pinned to the ropes and was bleeding from nose and mouth from Cordova's punches. Quirino tried to pull the fight his way late but just came up short. Scores 97-93 twice for Cordova and 96-94 for Quirino. Cordova fought above expectations and is now 2-0-2 in his last 4 fights. Quirino was unbeaten in his last 17 contests.

### **Tanjara vs. Delgado**

In a fight shortened due to a cut received by Tanajara he took the verdict on a technical decision. Tanajara dominated the first round with his jab. He used his longer reach to score and countered Delgado's advances with straight rights. In the second Tanajara stuck to the same tactics with Delgado forcing harder and occasionally getting inside. In the third a clash of heads saw Tanajara suffer a cut over his right eye. Delgado was getting into the fight more but Tanajara finished the round strongly. Tanajara kept the jab working in the fourth but his cut was ugly and worsening and at the end of the round the doctor recommended the fight be stopped so it was decided on the score cards. Scores 40-36 from the three judges for Tanajara. The unbeaten 22-year-old Texan wins the WBC United States title. He was coming off a career best win in December when he outpointed 36-2 Robert Manzanarez. Californian Delgado was 2-0-1 in his last three contests.

### **Velasquez vs. Villanueva**

Olympian Velasquez gets another inside the distance victory as he halts Villanueva in the fifth round. Velasquez bombarded Villanueva with hooks and uppercuts from the outset. He floored Villanueva in the third and had him in deep trouble in the fifth when the referee halted the fight. Now seven wins by KO/TKO for the 25-year-old "Hurricane" who won gold medals at the Pan American Games in 2011 and 2015 and competed at the 2016 Olympics. Villanueva, 18, was 8-0-1 going into this one but gets his first inside the distance loss.

### **Pacheco vs. Aguilar**

A long way down the card and only a four round fight so why bother? Well Pacheco, who won 40-36 on the three cards, may be one for the future. Still just 17 the 6'4" Pacheco was a Silver Gloves National champion, USA Boxing Junior Open champion and has signed up with Matchroom.

**Alvarez, Argentina: Welter: Gustavo Vittori (22-4-1) W PTS 10 Walter Castillo (13-3).** Vittori collects the vacant WBC Latino Silver title with decision over Castillo. This was a fast-paced fight with “Little Dog” Vittorio the clear winner. These two went at it from the first bell, with no time spent studying their opponent. It became apparent quickly that southpaw Vittorio had the harder punch and better defence. Castillo had the edge in reach but that was never a factor and although he never backed away from the exchanges he lacked the power to hurt Vittorio- with his fists anyway. Castillo was warned about his bulling forward head first. He was deducted a point and it was Castillo himself who was cut in the clashes and ended a loser. Scores 100-89 for Vittorio from the judges. Vittorio was beaten inside the distance by Alex Saucedo and Mikkel LesPierre in the USA but since returning home has now scored two wins. Castillo also lost in an away fight lasting less than a round against Josh Kelly in Manchester in November.

**Cornwall, Canada: Light: Tony Luis (27-3) W TKO 8 Juan Jose Martinez (26-8).** Fighting in his home town Luis gets a stoppage win over a sliding Martinez. Luis outboxed and outscored Martinez until the referee had seen enough and stopped the uneven contest in the eighth of a ten round fight. The 31-year-old “Lightning” registered win No 8 since coming in as a late substitute and losing on points against Derry Mathews for the interim WBA title in 2015. Despite the run of wins Luis is unrated so may have to step up the quality of his opposition. Mexican Martinez was 19-1 when he started out but has won only one of his last seven fights but with Felix Verdejo, Alberto Machado and Andres Gutierrez in the list of his opponents he has had a tough ride.

**Accra, Ghana: Light: Emmanuel Tagoe (30-1) W PTS 12 Vyacheslav Gusev (25-6). Super Middle: Bastie Samir (16=-0-1) W Raoul Lokossou (0-2).**

**Tagoe vs. Gusev**

Having relinquished his IBO title Tagoe starts his search for another title with a win over Gusev. The little Russian made a busy start throwing plenty of jabs but he was mostly short with his punches against the longer reach of Tagoe. The local fighter was sharp with his jab and it was the controlling punch in the fight. Gusev continually took the fight to

Tagoe but if he did get past the jab then excellent if flashy defensive work from Tagoe blunted the Russian's attacks and Gusev lacked the power to hurt Tagoe. A quick right in the third knocked Gusev off balance and his gloves touched the canvas and he was given a count. Tagoe connected with some hard rights and left hooks trying to end the fight but Gusev was fighting back by the bell. Tagoe had too much speed, skill and reach for Gusev and for much of the fight was content to put on a show rather than press his attacks. Gusev never stopped trying to come forward but was outclassed. Scores 120-107, 119-108 and 118-109 all for Tagoe. The 30-year-old former undefeated IBO champion wins the vacant IBF International title and will now campaign in the USA under Lou Dibella's banner. Tagoe has wins over former champions Mzonke Fana and Paulus Moses. He lost his first pro fight so has now won 30 in a row. Gusev did his best and keeps his record of never losing by KO/TKO.

### **Samir vs. Lokossou**

This was a disgrace to boxing. Samir is a good quality boxer with a punch and he was matched against a man who's only recorded fight was an inside the distance loss in 2004! Lokossou had only the most basic of techniques and every time he threw a punch he threw his whole body into it and when he missed he had thrown himself so far around he was facing the crowd. He tried to bundle Samir to the ropes but had no idea of what to do when he got there. Samir was throwing punches to the body and Lokossou took them. In the second round Lokossou was sent sprawling onto the canvas by a punch. After the count Samir threw a series of punches with a brutal left hook that crashed onto Lokossou's chin and sent him flying down with his head crashing on the canvas. The referee immediately waived the fight off and a motionless Lokossou was on the floor for almost five minutes. Samir, who turned pro in the USA gets his sixteenth win by KO/TKO. This is his first fight since stopping unbeaten Briamah Kamoko in October 2017.

**Managua, Nicaragua: Minimumweight: Byron Rojas (26-4-3,1ND) W PTS 8 Byron Castellon (13-13-3,1ND).** This was supposed to be a routine eight round win over a very modest fellow Nicaraguan. Castellon had already lost twice to Rojas but the last was a majority decision in 2017 so never accepted the loser's role. He constantly took the fight to

Rojas forcing Rojas out of his comfort zone and making him fight harder than he expected. Rojas won the rounds but he had to fight hard to do so. Castellon and his supporters thought he had done enough to win but the judges were split and two of the three gave it to Rojas 79-73, which seemed unkind to the efforts of Castellon, and the third saw Castellon winning 77-75. This was the first fight for the former WBA minimumweight champion since losing a close decision to Knockout CP Freshmart (Thammanoon Niyomtrong) in November. Castellon had won his last two fights.

**Fight of the week (Significance):** Chris Eubank's win over James DeGale raises the prospect of some interesting fights at super middle

**Fight of the week (Entertainment)** Andre Dirrell vs. Avni Yildirim was a tough, brutal match

**Fighter of the week:** Chris Eubank Jr

**Punch of the week:** The right from Antonio Vargas that ended his fight with Lucas Baez was a peach.

**Upset of the week:** Humberto Soto was expected to be too old and too small to beat Brandon Rios but he proved everyone wrong

**Prospect watch:** Russian Muhammadkhuja Yaqubov 14-0 showed class in beating former WBA interim champion Emanuel Lopez