

## **The Past Week in Action 5 February 2019**

### **Highlights:**

- Sergey Kovalev outboxes Eleider Alvarez to regain the WBO light heavyweight title**
- Richard Commey crushes Isa Chaniev in two rounds for the vacant IBF lightweight title**
- Oscar Valdez returns to action and stops Carmine Tommasone in seven rounds in defence of his WBO featherweight title**
- Teo Lopez continues his march of destruction as he batters Diego Magdaleno to defeat in seven rounds**
- Sergio Garcia outpoints unbeaten Ted Cheeseman to retain the European super welter title**
- Samir Ziani beats Julie Giner on a sixth round retirement to win the vacant European super featherweight title**
- Oldie Tomas Rojas scores late inside the distance win over Jairo Lopez and is hoping for a title fight**
- World rated Aston Palicte crushes Jose Martinez to keep alive his hopes of a return against Donnie Nietes**
- In Commonwealth title fights Felix Cash wins the vacant middleweight belt with win over Nigerian Rasheed Abolaji and Philip Bowes halts Tanzanian Benson Nyilawila for the super lightweight title.**

### **WORLD TITLE CARDS**

#### **February 2**

**Frisco, TX, USA: Light Heavy: Sergey Kovalev (33-3-1) W PTS 12 Eleider Alvarez (24-1). Light: Richard Commey (28-2) W TKO 2 Isa Chaniev (13-2). Feather: Oscar Valdez (25-0) W TKO 7 Carmine Tommasone (19-1). Light: Teo Lopez (12-0) W KO 7 Diego Magdaleno (31-3). Super Welter: Patrick Day (17-2-1) W PTS 10 Ismail Iliev (11-1-1). Super Welter: Bakhram Murtazaliev (15-0) W TKO 9 Elvin Ayala (29-13-1). Middle: Janibek Alimkhanuly (5-0) W TKO 5 Steven Martinez (18-5). Feather: Jason Sanchez (14-0) W TKO 2 Daniel Olea (13-7-2).  
Kovalev vs. Alvarez**

Sweet revenge for Kovalev as he outboxes and outpoints Alvarez to regain the WBO light heavyweight title

### **Round 1**

Not a great deal of action. Kovalev was regularly stabbing out his jab but falling short. Alvarez scored with a his jab to the body and just did enough to edge a slow round that could have gone either way.

**Score: 10-9 Alvarez**

### **Round 2**

Dominant round for Kovalev. He was constantly finding gaps for his jab and following in with hooks and straight rights. Alvarez was throwing one punch at a time and mostly missing.

**Score: Score 10-9**

**Tied 19-19**

### **Round 3**

A much better round for Alvarez. He was able to get on the front foot and was jabbing strongly with purpose and doing a better job of blocking Kovalev's jab. He was also firing rights. Kovalev did most of the pressing but was not letting his punches flow as he had in the second.

**Score: 10-9 Alvarez**

**Alvarez 29-28**

### **Round 4**

One for Kovalev. He was controlling the fight with his jab slotting it through Alvarez's high guard and then firing clubbing lefts and rights to the head. Alvarez was just not throwing enough punches and in hiding behind his high guard was just moving into Kovalev's punches without countering.

**Score: 10-9 Kovalev**

**Tied 38-38**

**Official Scores: Judge Levi Martinez 40-36 Kovalev, Judge Jesse Reyes 38-38 tied, Judge Lisa Giampa 40-36 Kovalev.**

### **Round 5**

Alvarez started the round well firing his jab and throwing a series of punches to the body. That was as good as it got for him once Kovalev started to find the rang with his jab and thumping rights. Alvarez tried to get close by coming in low but Kovalev cracked him with a right to the head and then finished the round with more hurtful head punches. Some of Kovalev's shots were getting blocked but he was punching while Alvarez was waiting.

**Score: 10-9 Kovalev**

**Kovalev 48-47**

## **Round 6**

Alvarez scored the first punch in this one a clubbing overhand right to the head which was the best pinch he had landed so far in the fight. From there Kovalev took over. He was teeing off on the advancing Alvarez and digging left hooks to the body. As Alvarez was coming forward Kovalev was firing a quick sequence of punches and then moving leaving the plodding Alvarez without a target

**Score: 10-9 Kovalev**

**Kovalev 58-56**

## **Round 7**

Alvarez let his hands go more in this one. When Alvarez came forward behind his high guard Kovalev was again able to stab home punches but in this round Alvarez was standing and exchanging punches and just getting the better of the action.

**Score: 10-9 Alvarez**

**Kovalev 67-66**

## **Round 8**

It was boxer Kovalev and not "Krusher" Kovalev who was winning here. His jab and move tactics were frustrating Alvarez's attempts to get close. Kovalev was sliding punches through the porous guard of Alvarez and rattling him with quick bursts and then moving. Alvarez resorted to dropping his high guard and trying to walk Kovalev onto counters but that didn't work either.

**Score: 10-9 Kovalev**

**Kovalev 77-75**

**Official Scores: Martinez 78-74 Kovalev, Reyes 77-75 Kovalev, Judge Giampa 80-72 Kovalev.**

## **Round 9**

Another round for Kovalev. He was sticking to his hit and move tactics and landed a choice right over the top of Alvarez's guard. He continued to pop out punches not really loading up on them but still scoring. Alvarez had started to go away from the high guard and was holding his hands where he could throw punches but kept falling back to the high guard under pressure.

**Score:10-9 Kovalev**

**Kovalev 87-84**

## **Round 10**

Kovalev was in charge throughout this one. He was finding more and more gaps for his jabs and straight rights and was putting Alvarez on the back foot and having him floundering at times. Alvarez had largely

abandoned the plodding head down tactics but had also long since abandoned using his jab and had no answer to Kovalev's.

**Score: 10-9 Kovalev**

**Kovalev 97-93**

### **Round 11**

With his hands freed from defensive work Alvarez opened the round with a series of punches including a strong left to the head. Kovalev worked hard throughout the round and threw more and landed more but it was the most competitive Alvarez had been for a few rounds.

**Score:10-9 Kovalev**

**Kovalev 107-102**

### **Round 12**

Kovalev took the last clearly. He was against slotting home jabs and then firing quick bursts with Alvarez looking to land one big punch. Although he connected with a couple of hard head shots a confident Kovalev was forcing him back with quick accurate punches and was a clear winner of the round and the fight.

**Score10-9 Kovalev**

**Kovalev 117-111**

**Official Scores: Judge Levi Martinez 116-112 Kovalev, Judge Jesse Reyes 116-112 Kovalev, Judge Lisa Giampa 120-108 Kovalev.**

The 35-year-old Florida-based Kovalev had his tactics just right here as he jabbed, moved and fired short bursts of punches controlling the tempo of the fight with Alvarez too slow to catch him. With fellow Russians Artur Beterbiev and Dmitry Bivol holding the IBF and WBA titles respectively and Ukrainian Olek Gvozdyk the WBC champion Eastern Europeans rule the roost. Britain's Anthony Yarde is the WBO No 1 but I am not sure he is ready for Kovalev as he is yet to face an opponent remotely near the ratings. Alvarez had his tactics all wrong. Pressing behind a high guard only works if you can force your opponent to the ropes and work on him there. Alvarez never did that efficiently so rarely had Kovalev under any real pressure and he changed his tactics too late. He is still a force in this division and may look to get a return with Kovalev or try for one of the other belts.

### **Commey vs. Chaniev**

Justice for Commey as demolishes Chaniev inside two rounds and lifts the vacant IBF title in his second. attempt. Commey established a strong jab from the outset. Chaniev was trying some rights but looked low on power. Commey put Chaniev on the back foot with his jab but Chaniev landed with some good hooks and a straight right. That gave

Chaney the confidence to stand and trade which proved a big mistake. First he was shaken by a Comney left hook and then a straight right dumped Chaney on the floor. He was up quickly but he looked very unsteady and staggered backwards. After the eight count Comney leapt in to try to finish the fight but after landing a couple of punches Comney tripped and went down. There was no count and after Comney landed another right the bell went. With just eight seconds gone in the second round a left hook sent Chaney down again. He looked unsteady and after the count Comney piled in connecting with punches from both hands. Chaney tried desperately to hold on but when a short left hook on the inside floored Chaney again the fight was stopped. Great win for the 31-year-old from Ghana and win No 25 by KO/TKO. In his first shot at the title he lost a controversial split decision to Robert Easter and then suffered another blow in a questionable split verdict against Denis Shafikov. He had scored three good wins going into this one and crushed Chaney with ease. Boxing in Ghana suffered a blow with the loss of Isaac Dogboe against Emanuel Navaretti but this win by Comney will restore national pride and put a smile back on the faces in his home country. By winning this one Comney had lined up a huge fight against Vasyl Lomachenko in Los Angeles on 14 April but Comney indicated he had injured his right hand in the Chaney fight so there is some doubt over that. The ease with which Comney disposed of Russian Chaney puts a question over how Chaney came to be at No 3 the second highest rated fighter in the IBF ratings. Significantly he could not fill the No 2 spot because he had not beaten a rated fighter so the No 2 spot was vacant. He had beaten reasonable level opposition in Jean Pierre Bauwens, Juan Martin Elorde and Ismael Barroso but those fighters were all unrated when he beat them and he was crushed here.

### **Valdez vs. Tommasone**

Valdez returns to action and shakes off some rust as he retains the WBO title with stoppage of Italian Tommasone

#### **Round 1**

Neither fighter dominated the round. Valdez was quicker and more accurate with his jabs. Tommasone tried some rights but was mainly on the back foot and short with his punches.

**Score: 10-9 Valdez**

#### **Round 2**

Valdez stepped up the pace in the second . Again he was forcing Tommasone back with hard, accurate jabs. He was letting his hands go more but with his inactivity his timing was off. Tommasone kept stabbing out his jab but it was a defensive weapon not an offensive one.

**Score: 10-9 Valdez**

**Valdez 20-18**

### **Round 3**

Tommasone did well over the first half of the round. He was more positive with his jab and landing some rights. Valdez was hunting him down with more purpose but his timing was still out and Tommasone kept moving and kept jabbing and just did enough to edge the round.

**Score: 10-9 Tommasone**

**Valdez 29-28**

### **Round 4**

The roof fell in on the Italian challenger in this one. Valdez moved up a gear and hurt Tommasone early with a left to the body. Valdez was pressing hard and Tommasone stepped in to trade punches and Valdez connected with a straight right that sent Tommasone down. He sat on the floor and timed his rise getting up at eight. Valdez went after him but Tommasone boxed on the back foot piercing Valdez's guard with jabs and scoring with a four-punch combination. Just before the bell a long left from Valdez landed on the belt of Tommasone. He momentarily dipped at the knees and touched the canvas that led to a second count.

**Score: 10-7 Valdez**

**Valdez 39-35**

**Official Scores: Judge Javier Alvarez 40-34 Valdez, Judge Ursulo Perez 40-34 Valdez, Judge Elias Johnson 40-34 Valdez**

### **Round 5**

Tommasone was moving and jabbing again and now his jab was more accurate and he was getting through Valdez's guard. When Tommasone became too confident a left to the body from Valdez saw him backing off. Valdez began to find the target with his left hooks to the body and straight rights bringing blood from Tommasone's nose and bruising under his left eye as Valdez was finally getting his timing right.

**Score: 10-9 Valdez**

**Valdez 49-44**

### **Round 6**

Valdez was starting to load up on his punches but the punch that put Tommasone down early in this round was a jab which knocked the Italian off balance. He was up at eight and despite pressure from Valdez

was never really in trouble again as he boxed on the back foot with plenty of jabs.

**Score: Score 10-8 Valdez**

**Valdez 59-52**

### **Round 7**

It was over quickly in this round. With less than ten seconds on the clock a stunning short right uppercut from Valdez sent Tommasone down. The referee immediately waived the fight over despite protests from Tommasone. It looked as though Tommasone could have continued but it was only going to end with him taking more punishment so it was a wall judged decision by the referee. Due to injuries this is the first fight for Valdez since March 2018 and he took a few rounds to get his timing right and got the job done. His mandatory challenger is Filipino Genisis Servania so what happens next depends on whether the WBO insist he fights Servania or allows Valdez another voluntary defence.

Tommasone's role as challenger required some ratings "adjustment" from the WBO who parachuted him in on the back of a November win over a guy with a 8-8-1 record. Having said that he show a sharp jab and plenty of shifty footwork but with only five wins by KO/TKO was never a threat so just right for Valdez after his long period of inactivity. The night was not all bad for Tommasone as he proposed to his girlfriend in the ring and she accepted. Bravisimo Carmine!

### **Lopez vs. Magdaleno**

Another imperious performance from Lopez as he dismantles then demolishes Magdaleno. It was the power of Lopez against the hand speed and movement of Magdaleno and both were on show in the first with Magdaleno's right jab flicking out like a snakes tongue and Lopez landing with a couple of hard punches just before the end of the round. Magdaleno was quick with his fist again in the second and although he was landing for Lopez it was a case of insult but not injury and he shook Magdaleno with a vicious right uppercut that saw Magdaleno buckle at the knees and opened a cut on the bridge of Magdaleno's nose. Lopez is pretty quick with his own hands and was driving Magdaleno back with snapping hooks to the head starting to connect with some hard shots. He trapped Magdaleno in a corner and landed with some straight rights before Magdaleno skipped out of range. Lopez does not mind which hand he leads with and in the third he sneaked home a peach of a right uppercut and then continued to land with rights either as the lead or

following a jab. Magdaleno was throwing his jab at the start of the fourth but a few right counters from Lopez made him much more reluctant to commit himself to attack. It was a quieter round but it was Lopez whose punches were landing. In the fifth Lopez began to unload on Magdaleno with right uppercuts and straight rights. Magdaleno was trying to come in behind his jab with lefts to the body and had some success but there was no real sting to the punches whereas almost every punch Lopez threw was a power shot- and plenty of them were landing. Lopez hardly threw a punch over the first half of the sixth but then landed a right to the body that hurt Magdaleno. He continued to be sparing with his shots but connected with another body punch and snapped Magdaleno's head back with a left uppercut. Magdaleno kept working but late in the round as he moved inside a wicked left to the chin sent him tumbling sideways to the floor. He was up at eight and after the count with less than ten seconds left Lopez landed a couple more head punches at the bell. As Magdaleno walked back to his corner he was unsteady, there was blood dripping from the cut on his nose and his left eye was almost closed. Lopez connected with a series of hard head punches in the seventh driving Magdaleno to the ropes and pouring on punishment. A gutsy Magdaleno gestured for Lopez to bring it on and he did with more lefts and rights to the head and then connected with a fearsome left that put Magdaleno down on his back. The referee started the count but did not bother to complete but cradled Magdaleno in his arms and stopped the fight. The 21-year-old from Brooklyn makes it ten wins by KO/TKO. If he continues to destroy opposition this way I am going to run out of superlatives. To just talk about his power would be to understate his talent as he is also a very clever defensive boxer. He retained his NABF and USBA titles and won the vacant NABA belt so is covering all angles and is rated WBA 9/WBC 11/WBO 11. There is talk of a fight with Jose Pedraza this year and that would be an interesting test for Lopez. Magdaleno, 32, had previously only lost in world title fights being outpointed by Roman Martinez and stopped by Terry Flanagan in WBO fights. He won his two fights in 2018 but took a savage beating here so will be on the sidelines for a while.

### **Day vs. Iliev**

Former top amateur Day registers his sixth win on the bounce with unanimous verdict over Russian Iliev. The respective tactics gelled well



producing a competitive ten rounds. Iliev was the aggressor early with Day boxing well and countering the Russian's attacks. Iliev was going for quantity and Day with accuracy and more power punches. Most of the rounds were close and could have been scored for either boxer but it was Day's heavier eye-catching shots that earned him the verdict. Scores 98-92, 97-93 and 96-94 all for Day. The 26-year-old from Freeport was National Golden Gloves champion and great things were expected from him when he first turned pro, initially he had trouble adjusting to the pro game but seems to have settled now and is making progress. Iliev, also a good level amateur, was having his first fight in the USA and his first fight for almost 14 months so his slow start is understandable.

### **Murtazaliev vs. Ayala**

World rated Russian slowly breaks down a gutsy Ayala for a late stoppage win. Murtazaliev was attacking hard from the start and Ayala tried to match him early. In the opener a Murtazaliev punch had Ayala taking a knee but he survived the round. After that Ayala quickly went into reverse under the pressure. Murtazaliev continued to boss the action with Ayala doing just enough to stay in the fight and it looked as though Ayala might go the distance. Late in the eighth a left hook had Ayala badly shaken and Murtazaliev stormed forward in the ninth landing plenty and with Ayala on the ropes and being pounded the referee stepped in and halted the fight. The 26-year-old Murtazaliev retains the WBC USNBC title and makes it ten wins by KO/TKO in his last eleven contests. No names on his record yet but he is already rated WBO 7/IBF 10(9). Way back in 2008 Ayala challenged unsuccessfully for the IBF middleweight title losing to Arthur Abraham. Now 38 Ayala is a long way down the slope with one win in his last eight fights.

### **Alimkhanuly vs. Martinez**

Look out here comes yet another outstanding talent from Kazakhstan. Martinez is a good level pro and looked a reasonable test for southpaw Alimkhanuly. The Kazak boxer soon dispelled that notion. After taking the first two rounds he floored Martinez early in the third and rocked Martinez with savage uppercuts in the fourth. After another of those wicked uppercuts in the fifth the referee came in to save Martinez from more harm. The 25-year-old Oxnard-based Alimkhanuly gets his second inside the distance win. As an amateur he was a gold medallist at the

World Championships, Asian Championships and Asian Games but did not medal at the 2012 or 2016 Olympics. Certainly one to follow.

Martinez suffers his first loss inside the distance. He took Terrell Gausha to a majority decision but this was his first fight for eleven months.

### **Sanchez vs. Olea**

Sanchez dismantles Olea in two rounds. Sanchez blitzed Olea landing heavily with both hands in the first and then putting Olea on the floor with a powerful right in the second. Olea managed to return to the vertical but his legs were all over the place and the referee would not let him continue. The 24-year-old "Little Scorpion" from Albuquerque moves to seven inside the distance wins. A victory in October over unbeaten Jean Carlos Rivera saw him lift the vacant WBO Youth title and he was rewarded with No 15 in the WBO ratings. Mexican Olea suffers his third defeat in a row all against very tough opponents.

## **January 31**

**Alpine, CA, USA: Super Fly: Aston Palicte (25-2-1) W TKO 2 Jose Martinez (20-1-2).** Impressive showing by Palicte as he wipes out previously unbeaten Martinez inside two rounds. In the opening round Palicte used his longer reach to probe with his jab and then fired home straight rights. Martinez was going to the body and landed a good left hook. He was confident and taking the fight to Palicte and they exchanged punches. Just at the bell Martinez lunged forward with his head banging into Palicte's face but luckily there was no damage. Martinez went after Palicte at the start of the second landing body punches. A left hook to the body followed by a left to the head saw Martinez almost go down and he briefly touch the canvas with a glove. No count was applied but Palicte kept Martinez against the ropes and unloaded with shots to head and body. Martinez got off the ropes and fired back but was nailed with a series of rights from Palicte and dropped to one knee. He was up at eight but dropped under more rights complaining about a punch to the back of the head. He was up at eight again but as Palicte was beating on him the referee stepped in and stopped the fight. First fight for the 28-year-old Filipino since drawing with Donnie Nietes for the vacant WBO super fly title in September and win No 21 by KO/TKO. He has lost only one of his last seventeen

contests. He fights under the banner of the Roy Jones Jr team and is trained by former WBC light flyweight champion Rodel Mayol. He was an elite level amateur competing at the World Junior Championships and the prestigious King's Cup and his younger brother Jamie won a gold medal at the Asian Junior Championships. Puerto Rican Martinez beat 23-2 Jesus Martinez in 2017 but had only one fight in 2018.

## **February 1**

**Rochester, NY, USA: Super Middle: DeAndre Ware (13-1-2) W PTS 10 Ronald Ellis (15-1-2,1ND). Light: Will Madera (13-0-2) W PTS 8 Thomas Mattice (13-1-1). Middle: Dominic Wade (19-1) W KO 1 Martin Rios (23-19-4,1ND).**

### **Ware vs. Ellis**

Minor upset as Ware takes majority decision over previously unbeaten Ellis. It was a close fight all the way. Ellis made the better start working well on the outside with his jab with Ware trying to get inside. The fight changed after the third in which Ellis suffered yet another of the hand injuries that have plagued him in his career. With his right of limited use Ellis had to rely mainly on his jab. He tried to compensate by throwing even more jabs and for a while he was outworking Ware and built a lead. Eventually as it became apparent that Ellis was carrying the injury the always pressing Ware was able to step up his attacks and get past the jab and land with powerful rights. Ellis was only able to use his right sporadically and despite a big effort in the last Ware just got the decision his pressure and power punching deserved. Scores 96-94 twice for Ware and 95-95. Big win for Toledo fireman Ware who had suffered his only loss to date when coming in as a late substitute and being outpointed by Cem Kilic in September. He collects three previously vacant titles in one go as he wins the NABA, WBC Continental Americas and the USBO titles. More bad luck for former National Golden Gloves champion Ellis. Hand injuries have caused two extended periods of inactivity but he was also out for fourteen months back in 2013/2014. Whilst that was due to an elbow injury it was also the result of positive test. He will be inactive again whilst this latest injury heals .

### **Madera vs. Mattice**

Good matchmaking under the sponsorship of Shobox sees a second very close battle between unbeaten fighters as Madera beats favourite Mattice on a tight unanimous verdict. Madera won this one on the basis of his better work over the first half of the fight. He pressed the fight hard and Mattice was slow to get into his stride. Madera was the busier and more accurate. Mattice used his better skills to get into the fight over the middle rounds but Madera protected the early lead he had built with a strong finish over the last two rounds and was a good winner. Scores 77-75 twice and 78-74 all for Madera. The 28-year-old Madera from nearby Albany has struggled against very modest opposition but against a better class of opponent he showed improvement here. Mattice had also struggled lately. In his last two fights he had looked lucky to get a split verdict over Zhora Hamazaryan and then fought a draw with the Armenian.

### **Wade vs. Rios**

In his first fight for almost three years Wade disposes off Argentinian Rios in just 108 seconds. No time for any rust to show as Wade floors Rios twice with the second, a left to the head, putting Rios down and out. First fight for Wade since his crushing two round beating by Gennady Golovkin in a world title challenge in April 2016. Still only 28 it will be interesting to see where he goes next as he was 173lbs for this one. Rios, a former Argentinian champion at middleweight and super middleweight, suffers his fourth loss by KO/TKO and his eighth loss in his last nine fights.

### **Buenos Aires, Argentina: Super Feather: Pablo Ojeda (16-4-1) W KO 3 Mario Lozano (18-2-1).**

Ojeda's power too much for Lozano. After two fairly even rounds Ojeda broke through in the third. A straight right forced Lozano back to the ropes. He tried to fight his way off the ropes but an overhand right and a left hook sent him staggering and another left saw him pitch forward and down and he was counted out. Ojeda wins the vacant WBO Latino title with his eleventh win by KO/TKO. Lozano was 10-0-1 in his last eleven fights but they were mostly four round preliminaries.

**Fontvielle, Monaco: Middle: Diego Natchoo (18-1-4,1ND) W PTS 10 Patrick Momene Mokamba (7-24-4). Super Feather: Florian Montels (14-2-2,1ND) W PTS 10 Rachid Sali (6-8-2,1ND).**

#### **Natchoo vs. Mokamba**

L'Indien Natchoo retains the French title with wide unanimous verdict over Mokamba. Natchoo made a great start flooring Mokamba with a hard left hook in the first round. Mokamba survived and tried to force the fight but Natchoo was too quick and too clever. The fight was fast-paced and both tired badly over the late rounds but Natchoo held on to the lead and was a clear winner Scores 98-91 twice and 98-92 all for Natchoo. He lost in a challenge for the French super middle title in 2017 but then moved down to middle and is now 8-0-1 in the new division. Next up will be a defence against experienced Michel Mothmora who he beat for the title in October. First shot at the national title for Mokamba who is now 2-6 in his last 8 fights.

#### **Montels vs. Sali**

Montels holds on to the French super feather title as he knocks back the challenge of No 1 feather Sali in a return match. Montels boxed coolly in this one with Sali trying to break through with wild attacks. A right from Montels had Sali in trouble in the third but he was unable to capitalise on that. Montels controlled the fight with his better boxing but over the second half of the fight with Montels taking no chances and Sali just not able to be a threat it was a disappointing contest. When these two fought in November a clash of heads saw Sali badly cut and although Montels had won the three completed rounds it was declared a No Decision. No mistake this time as Montels won all the way. Scores 100-90,99-91 and 98-92 for Montels. He is now 6-1,1ND in his last 8 fights with the loss being against WBC No 7 lightweight Yvan Mendy. Sali, a poor challenger, is 1-7-2,1ND in his most recent 11 contests

### **February 2**

**London, England: Super Welter: Sergio Garcia (29-0) W PTS 12 Ted Cheeseman (15-1). Middle: Felix Cash (11-0) W TKO 1 Rasheed Abolaji (11-5-1). Light Heavy: Craig Richards (13-1) W TKO 3 Jake Ball (12-2). Cruiser: Lawrence Okolie (11-0) W TKO 3 Tamas Lodi**

**(20-12-2 ). Middle: Scott Fitzgerald (12-0) W TKO 2 Filip Rzedek (2-12).**

Garcia vs. Cheeseman

Garcia outboxes a gutsy but outclassed Cheeseman in the first defence of his European title. No probing or posturing in this fight. Garcia was immediately sliding punches past the guard of the advancing Cheeseman who was using a high guard and throwing hooks. Garcia was on the back foot but very accurate with his jab and straight rights and moving quickly back leaving Cheeseman with no target.

Cheeseman did better in the second connecting with hooks and straight rights and landed a sharp uppercut but Garcia was throwing more and landing more and it was as well that Garcia is not a heavy puncher.

Cheeseman continued to walk into jabs and heavy counters in the third and fourth. Garcia did not have a strong enough punch to keep him out but was scoring with jabs hooks and uppercuts on the challenger.

Cheeseman upped his pace in the fifth and scored well with hooks. He was also moving his head more but Garcia was still finding plenty of gaps although Cheeseman rattled the Spaniard with a left hook late in the round. The sixth saw three minutes of pressure from Cheeseman and three minutes of pain and frustration as uppercuts from Garcia brought blood dripping from the challenger's nose and movement from Garcia left Cheeseman swishing air. At the half-way point it was hard to feel Cheeseman had won a single round. In the seventh Cheeseman tried both the high guard and hands down swinging but he just kept walking onto punishment. The eighth was a great round. Cheeseman again came out swinging. No high guard just powerful rights and lefts and for once he was connecting and bombarding Garcia who looked rattled. He was caught with some powerful punches and it looked as though Garcia was about to go under. Then the storm blew itself out and Garcia was the one landing heavily only for Cheeseman to come to life again and score with heavy rights to take the round. Garcia couldn't miss Cheeseman with his punches in the ninth and tenth as the challenger just kept walking onto punch after punch. His head was snapped back by a vicious uppercut and a bruise under his left eye was leaking blood. Cheeseman connected with some wild swings in the eleventh but he was walking forward with both hands at hip level making it easy for Garcia to rattle his head with a series of punches. Cheeseman had early

success in the last as he trapped Garcia in a corner and landed three rights to the head. After that he was just swinging wildly and too often standing right in front of Garcia with his hands down allowing the Spaniard to tee-off on him an array of punches. Scores 119-109 twice and a totally unbelievable 115-114 all for Garcia. Scoring is not subjective it is opinion but how Massimiliano Bianco scored this one 115-114 is beyond me. Garcia outclassed a very brave Cheeseman in his first defence of his European title. The super welter division is talent rich in Europe and the world. I am not sure Garcia has the power to beat the top fighters. He is No 4 with the WBC and No 14(13) with the IBF so could land a title shot. British champion Cheeseman was never able to get a foothold in this fight but is 23 so he can come again.

### **Cash vs. Abolaji**

Cash wins the vacant Commonwealth Boxing Council title with stoppage of Nigerian Abolaji. Cash was sharp from the start. He was snapping out his jab to head and body and landed a couple of hooks to the body. The next jab from Cash surprisingly saw Abolaji go back and down on his rump. He got up at six and after the eight count he seemed to have recovered. They boxed on until Cash connected with a combination and as Abolaji came forward Cash landed a hard jab and following behind it came a straight right that connected with the forehead of Abolaji who stumbled forward a couple of steps and then pitched face down on the canvas. He somehow staggered to his feet but wobbled back to the ropes and was obviously in no condition to continue and the fight was over. Seventh win by KO/TKO for 25-year-old prospect Cash. Abolaji had gone the distance with Sam Sheedy for this same title in 2017. He then scored three wins in 2017 before losing on a sixth round retirement against Bilel Jkitou in January 2018 for the vacant ABU title which was his last fight. He got caught cold here but it was a very disappointing performance from him.

### **Richards vs. Ball**

Richards right proves too strong for the skills of Ball. After a tentative opening in the first with southpaw Ball circling the ring and probing with his jab Richards landed a straight right which dumped Ball down onto the bottom rope. Ball arose quickly and looked OK and the bell went after the eight count was completed. Ball was working with his jab in the second but there was danger in every right that Richards threw. After

they both landed good punches a right to the body saw Ball drop to his knees. He beat the count but was hurt and the bell went before Richards could press home his advantage. It was mainly a case of exchanging jabs in third until two rights from Richards put Ball down again. Ball was up at eight and allowed to continue. Richards chased Ball throwing more rights. A couple landed and as Ball staggered back the referee stopped the fight with Ball protesting strongly that he was OK. "Spider" Richards, 28, makes it eight wins by KO/TKO and collects the vacant WBA Continental title. His only loss is against Frank Buglioni when he came in as a very late substitute and lost a close decision in a challenge for the British title. This is his fourth inside the distance win since then. The 6'4" Ball had won his last five fights.

### **Okolie vs. Lodi**

Okolie just keeps busy with stoppage of an outclassed Lodi. There was no way this one was going to last long. Okolie towered over the Hungarian and was able to spear Lodi with jabs and drop in right crosses. Lodi was in survival mode before the first minute was over. Okolie was able to stand off and place his punches where he liked with little or nothing coming back from Lodi. The visitor threw a few punches at the start of the second but soon went back into his shell' Okolie put Lodi down with a left and a right . Lodi was up quickly but floored again by a right to the head. Got to his feet and as the eight count was completed the bell rang. A straight right saw Lodi drop to one knee in the third. He beat the count and tried to come forward but two rights sent him down again. This time when he completed the eight count the referee waived the fight over. Okolie, the Commonwealth and British champion, move to 8 wins by KO/TKO. This was a defence of his WBA Continental title and whoever though this was a suitable title fight should hide their face. A top prospect Okolie was several classes above Lodi who was a late pick as his opponent. The danger is that if Okolie gets fed opposition like this he could develop habits that could cost him dear against better opposition but his team will make sure that doesn't happen. Eighth loss by KO/TKO for Lodi.

### **Fitzgerald vs. Rzadek**

Fitzgerald overpowers poor Rzadek for another quick win. No time wasting from Fitzgerald. He was landing thudding hooks to the body and strong rights. Rzadek tried a couple of punches but all he got for his



trouble was another series of blistering hooks from Fitzgerald. A stiff jab followed by a right to the head saw Rzadek fall to his knees late in the round. He made it to his feet and lasted the remaining seconds to the bell. Early in the second a left from Fitzgerald landed very low. He was given a warning and Rzadek given some recovery time. When the fight resumed a series of hooks and a wicked uppercut saw Rzadek fall to his knees and although he just made it his feet the referee stopped the fight. The 27-year-old Commonwealth gold medallist makes it nine wins by KO/TKO but this was just another keep busy fight. He will face a much sterner test when he tackles unbeaten Anthony Fowler in Liverpool on 30 March. Now that will be some fight. Rzadek in way over his head he has 18 losses inside the distance.

**Barcelona, Spain: Super Feather: Samir Ziani (28-4-1) W RTD 6 Juli Giner (23-4-1). Light: Frank Urquiaga (13-1-1) DREW 10 Ivan Tomas (9-0-1) . Super Feather: Moussa Gholan (11-0) W RTD 5 Alex Rat (8-4-2).**

#### **Ziani vs. Giner**

Another exciting European title fight sees Frenchman Ziani take on experienced former EU champion Giner in the Spaniard's home city and break both Giner's heart and that of Giner's fervent supporters to win the EBU belt. The pattern for the fight was set in the first round and never varied. Southpaw Ziani was marching forward getting in close and working the body and Giner was moving and countering. The rounds were close in a too-and-fro battle. Ziani was having success with his body punches and Giner was on target with sharp, accurate counters. It looked a fairly even fight over the first five rounds but in the sixth the body attack paid off for Ziani. He continued to press hard and Giner began to feel his 35 years and began to struggle. He had nothing left and although he was still on his feet at the bell he was finished and retired in his corner. Former French champion Ziani, 28, wins the European title at his second attempt having lost a very close decision, 115-113 from all three judges, against Guillaume Frenois in 2016. He had won seven in row since then Giner, 35, is a former Spanish feather and super feather and EU champion with his losses being to quality opposition in Ruddy Encarnacion, Miguel Roman and Martin Joseph Ward for this European title. It could be retirement time for "The Rock".

### **Urquiaga vs. Tomas**

Urquiaga and Tomas end up all even after a good ten round scrap for the vacant Spanish title. Urquiaga was the favourite and that looked the right pick over the first four rounds. From the fifth Tomas started to firstly get into the fight and then take it over and it was close all the way with the draw looking a fair result. Scores 95-95 twice and 96-95 for Torres. Peruvian-born Urquiaga suffered his only loss when he was outpointed by Edis Tatli for the European title last August. Tomas, 25, did well as this was his first ten round fight. Hopefully there will be a return.

### **Gholan vs. Rat**

Lanky youngster Gholan wins the vacant WBC Youth title with a victory over Rat. The tall Moroccan-born Gholan had already built a substantial lead when Romanian Rat retired citing an injury to his left arm. Good win for Gholan who was also in his first ten round fight. Madrid-based Rat, who previously fought for the IBF Youth title, had won his last two fights.

**Tokyo, Japan: Light: Kenichi Ogawa (23-1,1ND) W PTS 10 Roldan Aldea (12-7-1). Fly: Junto Nakatani (18-0) W TKO 9 Noaki Mochizuki (15-4). Koki**

### **Ogawa vs. Aldea**

Ogawa returns to the ring for the first time since being suspended for testing positive after winning the vacant IBF super featherweight title against Tevin Farmer. Ogawa won the first round but southpaw Aldea scored with some sharp lefts to the body in the second. Ogawa took over then scoring with heavy rights in the fourth and fifth with Aldea managing to get home some left hooks. Ogawa dished out heavy punishment in the seventh and eighth but Aldea refused to crumble and fought hard to the last bell. Scores 99-92, 98-92 and 97-93 for Ogawa. He celebrated his 31<sup>st</sup> birthday on Friday and gets win No 17 by KO/TKO. With Farmer now the IBF champion Ogawa will be looking to fight his way back to another title shot. Aldea, the Philippines lightweight champion, does not travel well-six of his seven losses have been on the road,

### **Nakatani vs. Mochizuki**

Southpaw hope Nakatani wins the vacant Japanese title with stoppage of Mochizuki. Nakatani was handing some severe punishment with lefts to the body and right uppercuts. Mochizuki managed to do some good

work inside in the second but was having to absorb some heavy hits. Nakatani continued to press over the next three rounds with his uppercut again a dominating punch. After five rounds Nakatani was well in front on scores of 49-46 twice and 50-45. Mochizuki was beginning to fade but kept fighting back although his face was now swelling from Nakatani's punches. In the ninth a right uppercut and a straight left had Mochizuki in trouble and the referee stopped the contest. The 21-year-old Nakatani now has 13 victories by KO/TKO. He is already rated WBC 4/WBO 10 so could be in line for a title fight later this year. First loss by KO/TKO for Mochizuki who had won 4 of his last 5 fights.

**Rio Bravo, Mexico: Super Feather: Tomas Rojas (51-16-1) W RTD 10 Jairo Lopez (23-10). Super Middle: Juan Macias Montiel (21-4-1) W TKO 4 Marcos Reyes (37-5).**

#### **Rojas vs. Lopez**

Age is but a number for "The Worm" as Rojas outclasses and beats Lopez. The tall, skinny southpaw, a former WBC super flyweight champion was living up to his "Doberman" nickname but Rojas showed a combination of good defensive work and hurtful counters and Lopez went down on one knee after a hail of punches in the fourth. Lopez is tough and he continued to try to take the fight to Rojas but was paying a heavy price and was floored again with a body punch in the tenth. It was a well beaten Lopez who went back to his corner and he did not answer the bell for the eleventh round. After losses to Cris Mijares and Edivaldo Ortega in 2017 it looked as though Rojas was coming to the end of the road. However he proved that he still had plenty left with a points win in October over Jhonny Gonzalez. He is No 8 with the WBC so at 38 there may be one more title shot out there for him. Fifth loss by KO/TKO for Lopez. He was 2-3 in fights in 2017 and 2018 but the three losses were against Luke Campbell, Jose Felix and 19-0 Joseph Aguirre

#### **Montiel vs. Reyes**

Montiel gets win over more experienced Reyes. Both of these are big punchers so it was not expected to go the distance. What was not expected was that young Montiel would almost blow Reyes away in the first round. Montiel came out punching and put Reyes immediately under pressure. He landed some heavy stuff and late in the round a series of head punches floored Reyes. He only just beat the count and was saved

from defeat by the bell. Reyes never really recovered from that pounding and Montiel had him under fire and on the back foot through the second and third and by the fourth the referee was ready to step in and declare Montiel the winner. The 24-year-old “Juanito” is a member of the clan fighting Montiel’s clan from Los Mochis which includes former world champion Fernando Montiel. This is his 21<sup>st</sup> win by KO/TKO. His only inside the distance defeat was against Jaime Munguia in 2017. Reyes started his career by going 32-1 in his first 33 fights and had reversed his only loss. He then went 3-3 in his next six including defeats against Julio Cesar Chavez Jr and David Lemieux. He had won his last two fights but he looked an old man here and just caved in under the pressure

**Anapa, Russia: Light: Elnur Samedov (8-1) W PTS 10 Viskhan Murzabekov (18-3).**

Samedov climbs off the floor twice and wins vacant Russian title at the second attempt with split decision over more experienced favourite Murzabekov. Samedov was down in the first and third rounds and both boxers escaped without injury when they toppled through the ropes with Murzabekov landing on the ring apron and Samedov pitching head first into the ringside seats. Neither fighter was injured and Samedov staged a strong finish to claw back the points lost over those first three rounds. The 25-year-old Azeri-born southpaw had lost a split decision to unbeaten Nikita Kuznetsov for the vacant title in March last year. He now goes forward into the semi-finals of the Presidents Cup. “Little Tyson” Murzabekov had won 6 of his last 7 fights with all of the wins by KO/TKO.

**London, England: Super Light: Philip Bowes (19-3) W TKO 2 Benson Nyilawila (10-2).** “Quicksilver” Bowes wins the vacant Commonwealth Boxing Council belt with second round stoppage of young Tanzanian Nyilawila. The tall East London southpaw gets win No 3 by KO/TKO and has won 10 of his last 11 fights. Nyilawila, 21, lacked the experience to really pose any problems for Bowes and suffers his second loss in a row.

**Necochea, Argentine: Middle: Francisco Torres (11-3) W PTS 10 Alan Castano (13-1). Middle: Jonathan Wilson Sanchez (14-3-1) W TKO 3 Sergio Lopez (12-3).**

### **Torres vs. Castano**

An upset result as Torres beats Castano. This was a quarter final fight in the Argentinian middleweight Super 8 tournament for the Carlos Monzon Cup. Castano was the favourite to win the Tournament but fell by the wayside as he was clearly beaten by Torres. After a close opening round Torres began to make use of his advantages in height and reach and was able to counter the attacking Castano with long lefts and rights and land sharp uppercuts when Castano did get inside. Castano took too long to get into the fight and was not nearly busy enough. By the end of the fifth Torres had built a good lead. Castano was walking through the punishment in the sixth and finally handing out some of his own. Torres banged back strongly in the seventh and there were some savage exchanges over the last three rounds as Castano tried vainly to close the points gap. Scores 97-93 twice and 96-94 all for Torres. Big win for Torres who did not even figure in the Argentinian ratings. Inactivity may have caused the slow start to the fight for Castano. He had only one fight in 2017 and was inactive in 2018. He was a top ranked amateur who competed in the World Series of Boxing before turning pro. He is the younger brother of Brian Castano the holder of the secondary WBA super welterweight title.

### **Sanchez vs. Lopez**

Plenty of incident in this one as Sanchez gets a win when Lopez just climbs out of the ring in the middle of the third round. In the first round Lopez was storming forward forcing Sanchez to the ropes. As he piled forward throwing more punches Sanchez stepped to the side and a charging Lopez went out over the top rope being caught by a couple of ringsiders before he hit the floor. He managed to get in the ring before being counted out. Later in the round Lopez floored Sanchez with a right and with Sanchez kneeling on the canvas looking up at him Lopez took a step forward and landed another right for which he should have been disqualified. Sanchez was up at eight and survived. In the next round the position was almost reversed with Sanchez missing with punches and ending up balanced on the top rope half way out of the ring with the referee grabbing him by the shoulder and pulling him back into the ring.

In the third Sanchez began to connect with hard right crosses to the head and the referee gave Lopez a standing count. When the action resumed Sanchez drove Lopez to a corner. Lopez then turned away , waived his arm and just climbed out through the ropes onto the ring apron. He then changed his mind and climbed back into the ring. The referee proceeded to count Lopez out., Bizarre! Sanchez needed the win being 1-3-1 in his last 5 fights. The victory puts him in the semi-finals of the Argentinian middleweight Super8. Lopez, the Argentinian No 6, had won 8 of his last 9 fights and even he could not explain his crazy actions.

**Ingelmunster, Belgium: Super Feather: Maidin El Garni (14-0) W PTS 10 Brian Pelaez (8-4). Super Feather: Hakim Ben Ali (21-6) W PTS 8 Matthieu Lehot (11-10-1)**

#### **El Garni vs. Pelaez**

El Garni lifts the vacant IBO Continental title with victory over Spaniard Pelaez. El Garni was conceding lots of height and weight against Pelaez but was always coming forward and getting past the jab of Pelaez.

Neither fighter is a puncher so there were plenty of fiery exchanged but without either really being shaken. Most of the rounds were close but El Garni looked to have just done enough to edge out the Spaniard. Scores 99-91, 98-92 and 96-94 all for El Garni. The 25-year-old El Garni is a former undefeated French lightweight champion but has moved down and is now No 2 super feather in the French ratings and No 18 in the EU lists. Pelaez , 23, had won 6 of his last 7 fights with the defeat coming in December against unbeaten Puerto Rican hope Abraham Nova .

#### **Ben Ali vs. Lehot**

Former Belgian champion Ben Ali also faced a taller opponent in former French champion Lehot. The pattern was much the same as the other main event with Ben Ali bundling his way inside with Lehot trying to work at distance. Ben Ali's tactics prevailed and he was a clear winner on all three cards. Scores 77-74 twice and 78-74 all in favour of Ben Ali. The former European Union title challenger lost back to back fights to unbeaten opponents Faroukh Kurbanov and Joe Cordina but has won two in a row and is hoping to fight for a title this year. First fight for Lehot since losing the French title last May.

**Fight of the week** (Significance): Sergey Kovalev vs. Eleider Alvarez which could lead to some interesting unification fights in the light heavy division

**Fight of the week** (Entertainment): Nothing really stood out.

**Fighter of the week:** Sergey Kovalev with honourable mentions to Richard Commey and Teo Lopez

**Punch of the week:** The sweet uppercut from Oscar Valdez that finished Carmine Tommasone was special as was the left from Teo Lopez that ended his fight with Diego Magdaleno

**Upset of the week:** No biggies although DeAndre Ware's win over Ronald Ellis was unexpected

**Prospect watch:** Kazak middleweight Janibek Alimkhanuly 5-0 is worth following.