

The Past Week in Action

Highlights:

- Jaime Munguia moves up to middleweight with win over Gary O'Sullivan and both Travell Mazion (17-0) and Hector Tanajara (19-0) score wins on undercard
- Joe Smith revives his career with a split decision over Jesse Hart in other fights in Atlantic City Steven Nelson (16-0) wins and Joseph Adorno (14-0) is held to a draw
- Jaron Ennis goes to 25-0 with stoppage of Bakhtiyar Eyubov and on the same show Russian heavyweight Aпти Davtaev stops Keith Barr and is now 19-0-1

January 10

Atlantic City, NJ, USA: Welter: Jaron Ennis (25-0) W TKO 4 Bakhtiyar Eyubov (14-2-1, 1ND).Heavy: Aпти Davtaev (19-0-1) W TKO 3 Keith Barr (20-13-1). 1

Ennis vs. Eyubov

Ennis stops Eyubov in four rounds. Ennis almost overwhelmed Eyubov in the opener. Eyubov was giving away lots of height and reach (5'6" tall with 66 ½" reach to Ennis 5'10 and 74" reach) and as he plodded forward behind a high guard Ennis met him with bunches of fast, accurate hooks to head and body from both hands. A series of head punches had Eyubov stumbling back and he went down on his rump. He beat the count but a blistering attack from Ennis had Eyubov forced back and as Ennis continued to land slashing shots from both hands Eyubov was forced to drop to on one knee to survive. Despite the punishment he took in the first round Eyubov marched forward again in the second and third. He landed some good shots of his own but the punches from Ennis were come too fast and from too many angles for Eyubov and at the end of the round local commissioner Larry Hazzard took it upon himself to warn Eyubov's corner that unless he saw an improvement in the fourth the fight would be stopped. Eyubov was trying to walk through a storm of punches early in the fourth and was rocked back on his heels. He steadied himself and walked in again firing a couple of hooks then clinches at which point the referee stopped the action the timing of which was a little controversial but Eyubov was only going to soak up more

punishment. The tall 22-year-old switch-hitter from Philadelphia looks an outstanding talent and 2020 will almost certainly be a breakthrough year for him. He is rated WBO 13/IBF 15 and now has fifteen inside the distance wins on the spin. Dad Derek Sr. and Brothers Derek and Farah boxed but never fought for a world title but Jaron looks capable of fighting and winning a title. The 33-year-old Houston-based Kazak Eyubov, who is trained by Charles Mooney, who won a silver medal in Montreal as a member of the great 1976 US Olympic boxing team. Suffers his second loss in a row having been outpointed by Brian Ceballo in June.

Davtaev vs. Barr

Russian Davtaev gets another inside the distance win as he floors and halts Barr in the third. The physical differences in this one were even more pronounced than in the Ennis vs. Eyubov fight with Davtaev at 6'5" to the 5'11" of Barr. Davtaev was able to soften Barr up with jabs and long rights over the first two rounds before ending things in the third. A right cross put Barr down and although he made it to his feet the fight was halted. The 30-year-old "Thunderstorm of the Caucasus" has scored 18 of his 19 victories by KO/TKO but has yet to face anything resembling a test. Eighth inside the distance loss for Barr.

Monte Hermoso, Argentina: Light: Agustin Quintana (12-1-1) W TKO 2 Gabriel Punalef 24-10-5). Quintana batters Punalef to defeat inside two rounds. It was too easy for Quintana who shook Punalef with rights in the first before ending it in the second. Two right to the head put Punalef down. He got up but was unsteady on his feet. A right uppercut unhinged his legs and a couple of rights sent him staggering across the ring to the ropes. The referee gave Punalef a standing count and when he was shaken by more rights the referee waived the fight over. "Sugar" Quintana, 23, wins the vacant WBA Fedebol title with his fifth victory on the bounce. Fifth loss inside the distance for Punalef.

January 11

Atlantic City, NJ, USA: Light Heavy: Joe Smith (25-3) W PTS 10 Jesse Hart (26-23). Super Middle: Steven Nelson (16-0) W TKO 8 Cem Kilic (14-1). Light: Joseph Adorno (14-0-1) DREW 8 Hector

Garcia (14-7-3,1ND). Super Middle: Chris Thomas (14-1-1) W TKO 1 Samir dos Santos Barbosa (37-17-3). Heavy: Sonny Conto (6-0) W KO 1 Curtis Head (5-5). Welter: Xander Zayas (3-0) W PTS 4 Corey Champion (1-2).

Smith vs. Hart

Smith gets split decision over Hart but ignore the “split” Smith one this all the way. The tactics were set early with Smith striding forward aggressively and Hart on his toes jabbing and moving with Smith indicating for Hart to stand and trade in the first thirty seconds of the fight. As quickly as Hart was moving Smith still managed to trap him on the ropes and land a series of punches to take the opening round. Hart boxed well early in the second but was shaken by rights and rocked by an uppercut later in the round. After the fight Hart said he had injured his right hand in his final sparring session and already he was using the right sparingly. Hart had a better third boxing well on the retreat and connecting with a right uppercut inside. Smith was relentless in the fourth and had Hart in trouble at the end of the round from a right. The fifth and sixth saw more pressure from Smith. Hart’s left jab and left hooks had caused a bump under the right eye of Smith but where a right was required to counter or stop Smith advancing Hart was having to twist his stance to use his left. Smith’s pressure paid off in the seventh. He had Hart reeling and landed a heavy right. Hart went down on one knee briefly touching the canvas. He bounced up immediately and Smith connected with a couple of punches before the referee was able to get between them to give Hart a count. After the count Smith landed a couple of head punches but the bell rang to save Hart. He had a better eighth but was shaky again in the ninth as a left from Smith sent him flying back across the ring and into the ropes. Hart was in deep trouble but the action stopped for the doctor to examine a cut over the left eye of Hart and after brief break Hart connected with some quality left hooks. Smith pressed hard throughout the tenth to emerge a clear winner. Scores 98-91 and 97-92 for Smith and a ludicrous 95-94 for Hart-unbelievable! Much needed win that saves Smith’s career. In a spell of just one fight in each of years 2017, 2018 and 2019 that saw him lose big fights to Sullivan Barrera and to Dmitry Bivol in a challenge for the secondary WBA title he looked to be fading out of the picture. Now he has hopes of a return with Bivol or a shot at Jean Pascal’s secondary

WBA title or whoever wins the vacant WBO title. Big blow for Hart as he was No 3 with the WBO and No 4 with the WBA. It would be wrong to judge him on this showing as he was virtually a one-armed fighter so don't be surprised if the fights for a version of the title later this year. The loss was a double blow for Hart. He had worn an executioner's mask into the ring indicating he was there to get revenge against Smith for ending the career of Hart's close friend Bernard Hopkins.

Nelson vs. Kilic

Nelson collects the vacant NABO title with inside the distance win over Kilic. Kilic was competitive over the first five rounds taking the fight to Nelson who was focusing on the body scoring heavily with both hands. From the sixth Kilic tired and although he tried to match Nelson on the inside Nelson was getting the better of the exchanges and slowly broke Kilic down. Nelson rocked Kilic with an uppercut late in the sixth and by the seventh Kilic had slowed and was handicapped by a right eye that was almost closed. Nelson continued to pile on the pressure in the eighth until Kilic's trainer Buddy McGirt climbed onto the ring apron to signal his fighter's surrender. Nelson, 31, a former US National, Army and Armed Forces champion who served in Afghanistan was rated No 15 by the WBO before this fight but should climb a few places in their next ratings and is aiming for a title fight this year. Californian-based German-born Turk Kilic was in his first ten round fight and with more experience could come again.

Adorno vs. Garcia

Minor upset as highly touted Adorno fights to a split draw against Garcia in an entertaining fight. Adorno looked sharp boxing on the back foot stabbing home jabs and countering crisply. As the fight progressed Garcia began to press harder and although he was still eating sharp shots from Adorno he was starting to have some success inside. Garcia just kept coming and although he was eating punches nothing Adorno landed was having any effect and more and more Adorno was being forced to stand and trade rather box and move. Adorno had built a slight lead after his more effective early work but Garcia was stronger over the late rounds and the draw looked right. Scores 77-75 Adorno, 77-75 Garcia and 76-76. The 20-year-old Adorno will have been disappointed with his performance but he came through a tough eighth rounds and will take away some lessons from the fight. Garcia did not fight like a guy

with a 14-7-4 record but he has never lost inside the distance and faced opposition such as Devin Haney and Juan Carlos Burgos and only lost on a majority verdict against current WBO No 5 Joe Noynay.

Thomas vs. Barbosa

Thomas gets the quickest win of the night as he halts ancient Brazilian Barbosa in 47 seconds. A straight right to the head had Barbosa retreating on unsteady legs. Thomas forced him to a corner and was ramming home head punches when the referee stepped in and stopped the action. It looked a bit of a premature stoppage and Barbosa complained. "Sandman" Thomas, a 21-year-old from New Jersey, moves to eight wins in a row. Barbosa drops to three first round losses in his last three fights

Conto vs. Head

Philadelphian heavyweight hope Conto sends Head to the floor three times for a first round victory. The 6'4" Conto was giving away 53lbs to Head but the excess was all round Head's waist. A left hook to the body saw Head drop to one knee and although he beat the count he was really finished by that belter of a body punch. After the count as Conto came forward Head dropped to a knee and Conto's punches seemed to whistle past his head. The third "knockdown" came as Head collapsed from two hooks to the body. Fifth win by KO/TKO for Conto. No sort of test for Conto but fights such as these are a rites of passage for a newcomer. At 23 there is no need to rush Conto a former National Golden Gloves silver medallist who does his roadwork on the same South Philadelphia streets as Sylvester Stallone did for the Rocky film. Head is now 1-4 in his last 5 fights.

Zayas vs. Champion

After two first round wins Zayas gets in some useful ring time as he collects the points in every round against Champion. The 17-year-old Puerto Rican is a former US Under 19 champion who turned pro less than two month after his 17th birthday. Early days but one to follow. Champion did his job by going the four rounds.

San Antonio, TX, USA: Middle: Jaime Munguia (35-0) W TKO 11 Gary O'Sullivan (30-4). Super Welter: Travell Mazon (17-0) W TKO 1 Fernando Castaneda (26-14-1). Light: Hector Tanajara (19-0) W PTS 10 Juan Burgos (33-4-2). Super Fly: Joshua Franco (16-1-2) W

**TKO 9 Jose Burgos (17-3). Super Light: George Rincon (10-0) W
TKO 1 Diego Perez (13-10-1). Cruiser: Tristan Kalkreuth (4-0) W KO
1 Blake LaCaze (4-8-2).**

Munguia vs. O'Sullivan

Munguia moves up to middleweight and halts a gutsy O'Sullivan in the eleventh round of a bell to stoppage war. Flying start from Munguia who was letting his punches go from the off. He was piercing O'Sullivan's guard with jabs and then firing hooks to head and body. He put together a ten-punch combination before shaking O'Sullivan badly with a left and a right at the bell. O'Sullivan took the fight to Munguia in the second. He was willing to stand and trade and although Munguia scored with some heavy stuff at the end of the round a right from O'Sullivan clearly hurt Munguia. The fight was developing into a war. Munguia was throwing more punches and landing cleanly but O'Sullivan was absorbing everything Munguia chucked at him and firing back with hooks and uppercuts of his own. Munguia was throwing more and landing more but O'Sullivan was undeterred. He continued to walk forward and even though running into some thundering punches from Munguia he was just taking a few steps back and then marching in again and connecting with some strong punches of his own. The hectic action continued in the fifth and in the sixth with Munguia getting the better of the exchanges but also having to take a lot of incoming fire from O'Sullivan the Mexican went low with a left hook and was deducted a point. Munguia was landing clubbing punches in the seventh but then landed another lusty punch below the belt. O'Sullivan went down in agony and it was some time before he recovered but this time the referee did not deduct a point which made no sense. Munguia dominated in the eighth and ninth as O'Sullivan tired and his work rate dropped. O'Sullivan landed some slashing punches early in the tenth but then Munguia began to drive O'Sullivan back with huge head punches and O'Sullivan was cut and on shaky legs as he went to his corner at the bell. There was discussion in O'Sullivan's corner over whether to go out for the eleventh round but O'Sullivan went out and took the fight to Munguia until a torrent of head punches had O'Sullivan sliding along the ropes and down and the fight was stopped. A successful move up to middleweight for the 23-year-old former unbeaten WBO super welter champion and win No 28 by KO/TKO. He goes straight to No 1 with the WBO which puts him in line

to face Demetrius Andrade with an all-Mexican fight with Saul Alvarez a possibility later in the year. "Spike" O'Sullivan played his part in making this a hugely entertaining fight. The 35-year-old from Cork was 8-1 going into this one with the loss being a one round kayo against David Lemieux. His only other losses have been against Billy Joe Saunders and Chris Eubank Jr. With his small goatee and curled up moustache he looked more like Salvador Dali than Salvador Sanchez but he showed a fighters heart here.

Mazion vs. Castaneda

Another imperious performance from Mazion as he finishes seasoned pro Castaneda inside one minute. The tall Texan was spearing Castaneda with quick jabs and caught Castaneda with a couple of counters as Castaneda came forward. Mazion then connected with a right and just missed with another right before banging home a rib-bending left to the body that saw Castaneda turn away and drop to the floor writhing in agony. Castaneda actually made it to his feet at five but immediately dropped again still in agony from the body punch and the referee stopped the fight. The 6'2" "Black Magic" from Austin gets his thirteenth win by KO/TKO and wins the vacant NABF Junior title. Castaneda was coming off a draw with Tureano Johnson and suffers his eighth loss by KO/TKO.

Tanjara vs. Burgos

Tanjara adds another scalp to his belt as he takes unanimous decision over experienced former world title challenger Burgos. The rangy local fighter was just too young and too quick for Burgos who is not yet completely on the downslide but has not been active of late. Tanajara boxed well on the outside and found plenty of gaps in the Mexican's defence. If there is a weakness in Tanajara it is that he lacks real power so Burgos was able to keep pressing and forcing Tanajara to fight hard. Gradually Burgos slowed and Tanajara well ahead going into the last with Burgos finding something in the well as they stood and exchanged punches in an entertaining last round. Scores 97-92 twice and 99-91 all for Tanajara. The 23-year-old former US National amateur champion was having his first fight in his home town. He collects the WBC United States title and adds Bustos to a list of victims that already includes Roger Gutierrez and Robert Manzanarez. Now 32 Burgos was having his first fight since losing on points to Devin Haney in September 2018.

In three world title shots he lost on points to Hozumi Hasegawa for the WBC feather title and drew with Roman Martinez and lost on points to Mikey Garcia in WBO super feather title matches.

Franco vs. Burgos

“El Profesor” Franco stops Burgos in nine rounds. It was a case of power and accuracy against quantity here as Franco made an aggressive Burgos pay for scorning defence as he tried to overwhelm Franco. Burgos was piling forward launching punches from the opener with Franco countering with strong rights. Burgos was throwing wide shots and was rocked by a right in the second. He continued to fire a bundle of punches but Franco was blocking or dodging most and snapping Burgos' head back with rights. Burgos kept coming and kept throwing but Franco was dominating more and more. In the seventh a right uppercut had Burgos bleeding from the nose and badly shaken. Franco finished it in style in the ninth. A left hook unhinged Burgos' legs and Franco piled on the punishment driving him to the ropes and unloading with punches from both hands until the referee jumped in to halt the fight. The 24-year-old from San Antonio was coming off a three-fight series of one win and two draws against Oscar Negrete so it must have been nice to fight someone else for a change. A former top amateur Franco gets his eighth win by KO/TKO. Burgos, also 24, had won his last six fights five inside the distance but his opposition has been poor.

Rincon vs. Perez

Texan southpaw Rincon racks up another win but with a scare at the end. A left/right combination floored Perez early in the first and although he beat the count he was soon down again. He tried to take the fight to Rincon but was put down by a counter right. He dragged himself up but went down again from two rights and the fight was stopped. Now five victories by KO/TKO for 27-year-old Rincon. A elite level amateur he won bronze then silver and finally gold at the National Golden Gloves and scored victories over Jamontay Clark, Amir Imam and Robert Easter Jr. After returning to his corner Rincon collapsed reportedly suffering a seizure but he recovered and was able to leave the ring under his own steam. Poor Argentinian Perez has lost three in a row by KO/TKO two of those in the first round.

Kalkreuth vs. LaCaze

Teenager Kalkreuth blows away LaCaze in under two minutes. The 18-year-old 6'4" Texan (his US Amateur sheets says 6'2" but he might have grown since then) was up against a 6'8" opponent in LaCaze but quickly found the range with his jab and then connected with a long left hook that dumped LaCaze on his rump. LaCaze was up at five and Kalkreuth hunted him down. He rocked LaCaze with two rights and then landed a thunderous left hook that put LaCaze down heavily with the referee immediately stopping the fight. Kalkreuth was US Under-17 and Under-19 champion and competed at the Pan American and World Youth championships before turning pro last year three months before his eighteenth birthday. Impressive but much too early to say how far he can go. He showed quick hands and the finishing punch was a blistering shot. LaCaze drops to 1-5-1 in his recent activity.

Mar del Plata, Argentina: Middle: Lucas Bastida (13-1) W TKO 1 Gonzalo Chaparro (9-5-1). Bastida wins the vacant South American title as he overwhelms Chaparro inside a round. The tall "El Tornado" certainly lived up to his name as he came out firing punches. Chaparro tried to stand and trade with him but was caught with a series of head punches that led to two standing counts. A big right sent him slumping into the ropes and the referee jumped in to save Chaparro. The 22-year-old neighbourhood fighter has won his last ten fights. Chaparro suffers his fourth stoppage defeat.

Brussels, Belgium: Welter: Anass Messaoudi (8-0) W PTS 10 Cedric Peynaud (8-7-3). Heavy: Joel Tambwe Djeko (17-2-1) W KO 1 John Cortez (12-7-1). Welter: Mohamed El Marcouchi (24-2) W KO 3 Agustin Lugo (11-12-3).

Messaoudi vs. Peynaud

Local fighter Messaoudi wins vacant BeNeLux title with wide unanimous verdict over Frenchman Peynaud. Messaoudi had height reach and more skill on his side and Peynaud never really threatened Messaoudi's dominance. Scores 99-90 twice and 99-91 for the former Belgian amateur champion in his first ten round fight. On paper Peynaud was a good test having floored Conor Benn in their first fight and beaten 16-1 Mohamed Kani in June.

Djeko vs. Cortez

“Big Joe” blasts out Barcelona-based Colombian Cortez in the first round. The popular 6’6” 30-year-old Brussels-born fighter has won eight in a row. One of five children Djeko initially competed in martial arts before turning to boxing. Six loses in a row for Cortez.

El Marcouchi vs. Santana

Miami Beach-based Belgian El Marcouchi stops Mexican loser Lugo in three rounds. El Marcouchi has lost only one of his last 23 fights and that was on a disqualification but his opposition has been carefully selected. Seven losses in his last seven fights for Lugo.

Fight of the week (Significance): Tied as Munguia’ s win over O’Sullivan put Munguia in the already crowded mix at middleweight and Smith’s win over Hart can lead him to another title shot

Fight of the week (Entertainment): Munguia vs. O’Sullivan action all the way

Fighter of the week: Tied Munguia and Smith who both had significant wins with honourable mention to both Jaron Ennis and Steven Nelson

Punch of the week: The left hook to the body from Travell Mazion that ended his fight with Fernando Castaneda was a real rib-bender.

Honourable mention to the wicked left hook from Tristan Kalkreuth that flattened Blake LaCaze

Upset of the week: Hector Garcia (14-7-3) holding (14-0) prospect Joseph Andino to a draw was not in the script

Prospect watch: Texan Super Fly Joshua Franco 15-1-2

(Early to name Xander Zayas and Tristan Kalkreuth but I am sure they will figure eventually)