

The Past Week in Action 21 September 2020

Highlights:

- Erickson Lubin wins the WBC Silver super welter title with decision over Terrell Gausha in a disappointing fight**
- Jose Pedraza continues his busy schedule with wide points victory over Javier Molina in his second fight in just over two months**
- Tugstsogt Nyambayar floors Cobia Breedy twice in the first two rounds but then looks fortunate to win the decision**
- Welterweight Jaron Ennis again impresses as he hands Juan Abreu his first stoppage loss**
- Heavyweight Efe Ajagba outpoints Jonathan Rice in a slow fight**
- Mateusz Masternak returns with a win and eyes another shot at the cruiserweight title**

World Title/Major Shows

19 September

Uncasville, CT, USA: Super Welter: Erickson Lubin (23-1) W PTS 12 Terrell Gausha (21-2-1). Feather: Tugstsogt Nyambayar (12-1) W PTS 12 Cobia Breedy (15-1). Welter: Jaron Ennis (26-0) W TKO 6 Juan Abreu (23-6-1).

Lubin vs. Gausha

Lubin takes the early rounds and finishes strongly to outpoint Gausha. A cautious start with more probing than punching but with Lubin doing what scoring there was. Lubin took the second and third. He was getting through with right jabs and had Gausha stumbling with a hard left. Gausha was on the back foot and hardly throwing any punches. It was as if he had decided on counter punching tactics but had forgotten the punch bit. Gausha landed a couple of rights in the fourth and

fifth but again it was Lubin connecting with right jabs and straight lefts and he had won all five rounds easily. It's as well there were no fans in attendance as they would have been demanding their money back. Gausha was livelier at the start of the sixth coming in behind his jab with rights. Lubin then had a good spell before they went back to probing and not punching. There was a lot more action in the seventh. Gausha was finally letting his punches go and was just a little quicker than Lubin but Lubin rebounded to outscore Gausha in the eighth putting together some solid combinations. Gausha started to eat into Lubin's early lead by edging the ninth and a right had Lubin stumbling on unsteady legs in the tenth but Lubin survived. For me Gausha was still behind and Lubin did enough to take the eleventh and stunned Gausha with a right hook in the last round to emerge a clear winner. Scores 118-110, 116-112 and 115-113 for Lubin. The 24-year-old Orlando southpaw wins the WBC Silver belt and as he is already No 1 with the WBC he will almost certainly get a chance to revenge his first round kayo loss to champion Jermell Charlo he suffered in 2017- provided that Charlo beats WBA and IBF champion Jeison Rosario in a unification battle on Saturday. Gausha lost this fight with his sluggish start but this was his first fight for 16 months and only his second in almost two years so with a few more fights under his belt he could challenge again next year.

Nyambayar vs. Breedy

After an explosive start Nyambayar has to fight hard and it is only his early success that sees him take a split decision over Breedy. These two started at a fast clip and Breedy looked on his way to edging the first round giving Nyambayar a nose bleed but a heavy right to the chin from Nyambayar put him down. He did not look badly hurt and made it to his feet. The punch had landed with only five second remaining in the round so Nyambayar was unable to capitalise on the knockdown. Nyambayar attacked hard at the start of the second and a left

hook put Breedy down again. He rolled over and straight back up to his feet and after the count was willing to stand and trade with Nyambayar to the bell. Barbadian Breedy is 5'4" so he usually has to give height and reach to his opponents but he compensates for that with fast hands and a busy style. He outscored Nyambayar in the third again standing and trading. Pressure from Nyambayar saw the Mongolian edge the fourth but he had trouble with the speed and movement of Breedy who rebounded to take the fifth and sixth. The bout swung back to Nyambayar as he used his longer reach to score on the outside and win the seventh and eighth rounds but despite a swelling under his left eye Breedy was able to get inside and outwork Nyambayar in the ninth. This was proving a fast-paced, close and entertaining fight Breedy had fought his way back after those early set-backs but Nyambayar put the fight out of Breedy's reach by taking the tenth and eleventh. After an early bunch of punches Nyambayar decided to dance his way through the last round allowing Breedy to take it. Scores 114-112 and 114-113 for Nyambayar and 115-111 for Breedy. Those two knockdowns effectively saved Nyambayar from defeat. The 28-year-old Mongolian was having his first outing since losing a wide unanimous decision in a challenge to Gary Russell Jr for the WBC title in February. Breedy led him a merry dance but Nyambayar's No 2 spot in the WBC ratings assures him of a title fight next year if he can avoid a loss. Breedy was unlucky here. Although there were no name fighters on his record he showed here that he is ready to take on the best.

Ennis vs. Abreu

The speed and power of Ennis prove too much for Abreu who is floored three times and stopped. Ennis was quickly into his stride in the first stabbing out right jabs and then finding the target with some flashy combinations. A solid right to the head and a left hook rocked Abreu who was not quick enough to land anything himself. Ennis outboxed Abreu over the next four rounds piercing the Dominican's guard with jabs and then

stringing together five or six lightning punches. Abreu just could not get into this fight. Some needle crept into the fight in the fifth. Ennis landed low and Abreu turned away with his hands down but as the referee had not called a stop Ennis promptly threw some more punches and Abreu responded with a deliberate low shot which did stop the action for Ennis to recover. Near the end of the round Ennis connected with a blistering right uppercut that sent Abreu down on his back. Abreu was up at seven but then the bell went. They squared up to each other until they were both forced to turn away. Ennis came out firing in the sixth and as they traded punches a right clipped Abreu on the top of his head and he tumbled back and down. He managed to rise at nine but a series of punches sent him sprawling and the referee immediately stopped the fight. Philadelphian Ennis, 23, has impressive figures with 23 wins by KO/TKO including a current run of 16 in a row. He is rated IBF12/WBO 11/WBC 15 at welterweight but the division is top heavy with Errol Spence and Terrence Crawford holding three of the titles and WBA champion Manny Pacquiao not looking to take on someone as fast as Ennis. Abreu was 3 ¼ lbs overweight for the fight. This marks the first time Abreu has lost by KO/TKO having taken Egidijus Kavaliauskas and Alexander Besputin the distance in big fights.

**Las Vegas, NV, USA: Super Light: Jose Pedraza (28-3) W PTS 10 Javier Molina (22-3). Heavy: Efe Ajagba (13-0) W PTS 10 Jonathan Rice (13-6-1). Feather: Robeisy Ramirez (5-1) W PTS 8 Felix Caraballo (13-3-2).
Pedraza vs. Molina**

Pedraza continues to make up for time lost to the pandemic with his second win in just over two months. The classy Puerto Rican took control of the fight in the first round and never relinquished it. He was too quick for Molina getting his punches off first and never allowing Molina a toe-hold in the fight. It was a fast-paced clash of two good technical boxers but

Pedraza's movement and hand speed gave him the edge. As early as the second round his accurate jabbing had raised a lump under Molina's left eye. Heads bumped dangerously and Molina came off worse suffering a cut on the left side of his nose. Supposedly right handed Pedraza was constantly switching guards which had Molina befuddled and bewildered at times and Pedraza's higher work rate saw him pocketing the rounds as he invested heavily in a body attack. Molina upped his pace in the sixth but his legs were stiffened by a right in the seventh and he then had to survive an onslaught from Pedraza. Molina was shaken again by a left in the eighth as he seemed to have no way of combating Pedroza when the Puerto Rican boxed southpaw. Pedraza was countering so quickly and accurately that Molina was hesitating to commit himself to a punch even when he knew he needed a stoppage to win. A straight left had Molina hurt in the tenth and after that survival was his only concern. Scores 98-92 twice and 99-91 for the former IBF super feather and WBO lightweight champion. A shot at becoming a three-division champion has to be the aim but a points loss to Jose Zepeda in September means he has an uphill battle. After losing to Jamal James in 2016 Molina took two year out of the ring and had scored five victories since returning including victories over 19-1 Hiroki Okada and 22-2 Amir Ahmed Imam but he was well beaten here. Coincidentally both Pedraza and Molina competed at the 2207 World Championships and the 2008 Olympics but never met with Pedraza representing Puerto Rico at 60kg and Molina the USA at 64kg,

Ajagba vs. Rice

This was what in the days past would have been described as a "snoozer" as Ajagba plodded to victory over a slow Rice. Ajagba was strong with his jab but not really stringing any punches together. He buckled Rice's legs with a right in the second but it was almost boxing by numbers as there was little variety in his work. Rice really confined himself to a harmless

jab and an occasional right cross. He connected with two good rights to the head in the fourth and shook Ajagba with a better right later in the fight but was not looking to engage in any heavy trading. There were few highlights with neither fighter in trouble at any time and Ajagba was a comfortable winner. Scores 99-91 twice and 98-92 for Ajagba. The 26-year-old 6'6" Texas-based Nigerian reportedly hurt his right hand early in the fight which must have affected his performance. He has a strong jab and power and. He has wins over Ali Eren Demirezen and Razvan Cojanu and is rated WBA 12/WBC 14 but is still very much at the learning stage. Rice was stopped in the tenth round of a fight against Australian champion Demsey McKean (I always feel there should be a letter "p" between the "m" and the "s" in McKean's first name but maybe not)in March.

Ramirez vs. Caraballo

Cuban southpaw Ramirez continues his settling in period as he goes eight rounds for the first time in outpointing Caraballo. Ramirez was comfortable on the back foot letting Caraballo force the fight and he made Caraballo pay for his forward march with an array of classy punches. Ramirez showcased his hand speed and excellent footwork outboxing Caraballo early and then upping the pace trying to get an early finish but Caraballo was still there at the end of the eighth round. Scores 80-72 on two cards and 79-73 on the third. Ramirez has a lot to live up to having beaten Shakur Stevenson, Tugstsogt Nyambayar , Michael Conlan, Andrew Selby and many other top names in his time with the Cuban team. Caraballo was knocked out in six rounds by Shakur Stevenson in June.

18 September

Obrenovac, Serbia: Light Heavy: Marko Nikolic (26-0) W PTS 10 Patrick Bois (15-8-1). In a fight between a fireman- Nikolic and a policeman- Bois Nikolic retains the WBC

Mediterranean title with points victory in a bout that had been cancelled a couple of times. Nikolic made a good start staggering Bois with a right in the first but Bois rebounded and Nikolic had to fight hard for his win in an entertaining contest. Serbian Nikolic was shaper and more accurate but Bois was willing to walk through Nikolic's punches to land some clubbing shots of his own. Nikolic rocked Bois with a fierce attack in the third but Bois banged back with hard rights in the fifth. Bois looked to be tiring in the sixth and was dripping blood from his nose but Nikolic was already showing a swelling under his left eye. They battled hard over the late rounds with a right from Bois sending Nikolic's mouthguard flying across the ring but Nikolic was just doing enough to win the rounds. Scores 97-93, 97-94 and 96-94 for Nikolic. A three-time Serbian champion in the amateurs Nikolic competed at the World and European Championships. He was making the first defence of the WBC title but may struggle against higher level opposition. Bois, twice holder of the French title, is rarely in a bad fight. This is only his second contest in almost two years but his performance here should lead to more fights.

Managua, Nicaragua: Bantam: Alexander Espinoza (20-2-2) W PTS 10 Aron Juarez (17-8-3,1ND). Light: Francisco Fonseca (27-3-2) W KO 2 Lester Lara (16-12-2).Welter: Gabriel Escalante (14-0) W TEC DEC 5 Angel Galo (8-6-1).

Espinoza vs. Juarez

"Supernova" Espinoza has too much class for Juarez and goes 2-0-1 up in their three-bout series. Espinoza took control with his jab and as the fight progressed was putting together some impressive combinations. Southpaw Juarez was mainly on the defensive and unable to make use of his longer reach. He was on the brink of a stoppage as he took heavy punishment in the fifth. He survived and did enough to edge a couple of rounds but the speed and accuracy of Espinoza made him a clear

winner. Scores 99-91, 98-92 and 97-93 for Espinoza who is now the owner of the WBC International Silver belt. He had drawn with and then won a split decision over Juarez in past fights. His losses are a very debatable split decision against Mikhail Aloyan in Russia and a shock second round stoppage by experience Dixon Flores last August. Coming into this fight Juarez was 4-1 in his last 5 outings.

Fonseca vs. Lara

Fonseca punches too hard for southpaw Lara. After dominating the first round Fonseca waited out a brief attack from Lara in the second and then used a right uppercut and a left hook to floor Lara who tried to get to his feet but the referee waived the fight over. Second quick win in six weeks for former IBF super featherweight title challenger. He looked unlucky to only get a draw against Alex Dilmaghani in London in November but was knocked in 80 seconds by Ryan Garcia in February. Third straight loss for fellow-Nicaraguan Lara.

Escalante vs. Galo

Escalante gets technical decision over southpaw Galo. Escalante was winning this one by boxing outside and using his much longer reach. Although he was scoring with those jabs Galo was able to get inside on occasions. Escalante was tying Galo up inside and a frustrated Galo launched a deliberate butt which crunched into the side of Escalante's face. The referee deducted a point from Galo. Escalante looked to have suffered either a fractured jaw or cheek bone and was unable to continue but all three judges had him in front so he was declared the winner. The 23-year-old Escalante moves to 14 wins but is a bit lacking in the power department. Only the second fight since December 2018 for Galo.

**Guadalajara, Mexico: Super Light: Gabriel Gollaz
Valenzuela (22-2-1) W PTS 10 Erwin Bennett (13-2).
Light: Cesar Ayon (13-2-1) W TKO 4 Noel Mejia (14-2).
Valenzuela vs. Bennett**

Fighting in front of his home fans in a fight that signalled the return of boxing to Guadalajara Valenzuela floors and outpoints Bennett. The local fighter floored Ecuadorian Bennett in the second with a right cross but Bennett was up immediately and proved durable. Valenzuela dominated the remaining rounds and came close to stopping Bennett over the ninth and tenth but Bennett made it to the final bell. Scores 99-90 twice and 100-90 for Valenzuela. The 25-year-old Valenzuela (normally with the way Mexican names are structured he would be using his father's name of Gollaz but most local sources had him as Valenzuela) is unbeaten in 20 being 19-0-1 including wins over Nery Saguilan and Daniel Echevarria. Bennett was to have fought in a six round fight on the card but when Ulises Perez tested positive for COVID-19 Bennett was moved up to the main event

Ayon vs. Mejia

This bout was also affected by COVID-19. Ayon was to have fought Rene Tellez but Tellez also tested positive and was replaced at short notice by Mejia. Ayon was much too good for a tubby Mejia and handed out a solid beating. The referee stepped in and stopped the fight in the fourth as Mejia kept walking into more punishment. Only one loss in his last 14 contests for Ayon. Eleventh time Mejia has failed to last the distance.

19 September

Tarnow. Poland: Cruiser: Mateusz Masternak (42-5) W PTS 10 Taylor Mabika (19-6-2). Welter: Damian Kiwior (8-1-1) W TKO 2 Ruben Rodriguez (9-6-1). Heavy: Lukasz Rozanski (13-0) W TKO 2 Ozcan Cetinkaya (31-21-2). Cruiser: Adam Balski (15-0) W TKO 1 Jarek Prusak (9-5).

Masternak vs. Mabika

On his return to the ring Masternak wins wide unanimous verdict over Mabika. Masternak boxed his way through the first finding the range for his jab and adding a couple of accurate power shots. Masternak upped his pace in the second scoring well with lefts to the body and rights to the head. Mabika is slow and limited but tough and he showed he also had a good jab as he reddened Masternak's face. As the fight progressed Mabika was static in the ring centre with Masternak circling spearing him with jabs and clubbing him with lefts and rights. As he shed some rust Masternak started to put together some eye-catching combinations but Taylor has a good chin and he just kept trying to roll forward through the punches. Late in the fight Masternak tried hard to put Mabika away but the Gabonese fighter never wilted and stayed there fighting to the end. Scores 100-90 twice and 99-91 for the 33-year-old Pole. A former European champion Masternak was having his first fight since losing a very close decision to Yunier Dorticos in October 2018 in the WBSS. The cruiser division is a mess at the moment. Dorticos is IBF champion but his fight with Mairis Breidis can't be a unification fight as the WBC took Breidis title away from him and designated him the meaningless Diamond champion. Lawrence Okolie and Krzys Glowacki fight for the vacant WBO title in December and as usual the WBA have four champions in Arsen Goulamirian super champion, Beibut Shumenov secondary champion despite not having fought for over two years and Alexey Egorov is Gold champion. There must be a fight for Masternak in there somewhere. The 41-year-old Mabika has lost to four world champions with WBC champion Ilunga Makabu the only one to beat him inside the distance. He has won a number of secondary titles and is probably the best Gabonese fighter but that is a bit like being the best admiral in the Luxemburg navy.

Kiwior vs. Rodriguez

Home town fighter Kiwior blasts out Rodriguez in one round. After hunting Rodriguez around the ring the first punch Kiwior

threw was a straight right that dropped Rodriguez to his hands and knees. Kiwior looked to have landed another right when Rodriguez had a knee on the floor but got away with it. Rodriguez made it to his feet at eight and then moved and boxed until a right to the head sent him reeling to the canvas and again Kiwior threw a punch whilst Rodriguez had one knee on the floor but this time he missed. Again Rodriguez beat the count but was promptly knocked down again and the referee stopped the fight. A former top level amateur Kiwior has had a couple of bad set-backs being floored and outpointed by English journeyman Chris Jenkinson (10-61-3) and only drawing with four fight novice Wes Smith. He has won his last four fights and this is his first inside the distance victory. Fourth loss by KO/TKO for former Spanish title challenger Rodriguez.

Rozanski vs., Cetinkaya

A farce badly disguised as a fight as Rozanski halts tubby Turk in two rounds. Cetinkaya was down twice in the first minute of the fight and was given another count when his gloves touched the floor as he tried to duck away from Rozanski's punches. A body punch caused his fourth knockdown and there was still another minute of the first round remaining. A left and right seconds before the bell saw him tumble to the canvas for the fifth time. Knockdowns No 6 and 7 came in the second round but really in both cases Cetinkaya went down to avoid a punch not because of one. A right to the head dropped Cetinkaya down for the eighth time and the referee just waived the fight over-about six counts too late. Polish champion Rozanski has won his last eleven fights by KO/TKO but he is 34 and limited and I can't see him progressing much beyond domestic level. Cetinkaya, 42, has fifteen losses by KO/TKO and was pathetic here.

Balski vs. Prusak

Balski obliterates Prusak. This one had a frantic start with both throwing wild punches. A left hook from Balski dropped fellow-

Pole Prusak. He made it to his feet at the count of five then dropped to one knee before getting up at eight. A right cross had him stumbling and a right uppercut put him down. He arose but the referee would not let him continue. Over and done with in 84 seconds. Ninth quick win for Polish champion Balski. Prusak, 36, suffers his fourth stoppage defeat.

Tijuana, Mexico: Super Light: Kevin Torres (17-1-1) W PTS 8 Jose Cuevas (13-2-1). Bantam: Carlos Lopez (13-0-2) W PTS 8 Breenan Rhyes Macias (7-1-2).

Torres vs. Cuevas

Torres keeps his winning sequence going as he outpoints Cuevas. "The Diamond Boy" from Washington State dropped Cuevas in the fifth but Cuevas rallied enough to last the distance. Now seven consecutive victories for Torres. Cuevas had won his three previous fights.

Lopez vs. Macias

A bit of an upset as Lopez outpoints Mikey Garcia's fighter Macias. This one was wall-to-wall war. After four rounds Lopez had battled his way in front being on top 40-36 on two cards and level on the other. Macias fought hard over the last four rounds to claw his way back into the fight but could not overcome Lopez's early lead. Scores 78-74 twice and 77-75 for Lopez who stays unbeaten and collects the vacant WBC Youth title. Texan Macias had won his last four contests. Both fighters were moving up to eight rounds for the first time.

Jefferson City, MO, USA: Cruiser: Jesse Bryan (19-3-2,2ND) W KO 3 Gary Culp (10-10). Bryan delights his home town fan with third round kayo of Culp. The 36-year-old Bryan returned to the ring in 2017 after being inactive for twelve years. He has won ten in a row but he never fought outside of Missouri and even the guys he has lost to would be classed as substandard. Culp is 2-7 out of his last 9 fights,

20 September

Sesto Fiorentino, Italy: Super Welter: Orlando Fiordigiglio (31-3) W Francesco Lezzi (12-15-2).

Back in the ring since his second round kayo loss to Sam Eggington in September last year Fiordigiglio wins unanimous decision over former victim Lezzi. Fiordigiglio forced Lezzi to fight a defensive fight. He had Lezzi on the edge of defeat with a right in the fourth and had him under heavy fire in the fifth but as when they met in 2018 Lezzi refused to buckle and lasted the distance. At 36 the former Italian, European Union and WBC International champion will be look to regain some injured pride suffered in the loss to Eggington. Former Italian champion Lezzi has only lost once by KO/TKO.

Dnipro, Ukraine: Heavy: Andriy Rudenko (33-5) W PTS 10 Kostiantyn Dovbyshchenko (7-8-1). Heavy: Viktor Vykhryst (3-0) W TKO 3 Gabriel Enguema (10-10). Heavy: Ali Eren Demirezen (13-1) W PTS 6 Kamil Sokolowski (9-19-2). Super Light: Volkan Gokcek (3-0) W TKO 6 Ruslan Belinskiy (7-1-1).

Rudenko vs. Dovbyshchenko

Routine win as Rudenko takes unanimous decision fellow Ukrainian Dovbyshchenko. Rudenko needed an easy night after losses to Agit Kabayel for the European title and to Zhilei Zhang. All of Dovbyshchenko `s losses have been on points so he gave Rudenko some useful work.

Vykhryst vs. Enguema

Already being hailed as the new Klitschko Vykhryst scored a devastating kayo of Spaniard Enguema. The finishing punch was a booming right that left Enguema flat on the canvas out cold. The 28-year-old 6'5" German-based Vykhryst has won his three fights by KO/TKO. He was a gold medal winner at the European Championships in 2017 and 2019 and had qualified

for Tokyo but decided to turn pro instead. Enguema suffers his fourth inside the distance defeat and has won only 2 of his last 9 fights.

Demirezen vs. Sokolowski#

Like Rudenko Demirezen needed ring time and a win and he managed both by outpointing British-based Pole Sokolowski over six rounds. First fight since January for Demirezen and second victory since losing to Efe Ajagba in Las Vegas in July last year. Only one win in his last five contests for Sokolowski

Gokcek vs. Belinskiy

Former leading Turkish amateur Gokcek brutalised Ukrainian Belinskiy flooring him four times before stopping him in the sixth. Gokcek had Belinskiy on the floor in both the second and third rounds and the fight was stopped after he registered two more knockdowns in the sixth. Gokcek, 24, was Turkish national champion and a bronze medal winner at the European Under-22 Championships. Belinskiy's 7 victims had been low level with only 11 wins between them

Fight of the week (Significance): Erickson Lubin's win over Terrell Gausha put him at the front of the queue for a shot at the WBC title. Honourable mention to Jose Pedraza who also boosted his hopes of a title fight next year with his win over Javier Molina

Fight of the week (Entertainment): Tugstsogt Nayambayar's fight with Cobia Breedy had an explosive start and then was close the rest of the way.

Fighter of the week: I am going for Cobia Breedy for climbing off the floor twice to give Nyambayar all the trouble he could handle

Punch of the week: The right uppercut from Jaron Ennis that floored Juan Abreu was perfection but Abreu did get up. For that reason I go for the booming right from Viktor Vykhryst that knocked poor Gabriel Enguema out cold.

Upset of the week: None. They all went the way of the favourites

Prospect watch: None that I have not already fingered

Observations

Boxing doesn't need enemies when it serves up shows like the one in Tarnow, Poland, There were nine fights six of them ended in the first round and one in the second. The one that lasted into the second saw obese Turk Ozcan Cetinkaya fall to the floor six times in the first round and twice in the second. The referee should be reprimanded for cruelty to the fans for letting the fight go to eight knockdowns. For anyone of my era it brings back memories of the "Philadelphian Death Squad" . It got that name not because they were hit men but because they were dead beats and accidents waiting to happen. There were usually six to nine of them and they were delivered to a promoter as a package by an agent-if I remember correctly his surname was Christmas- and they all travelled in one van often fought with trainers on their feet instead of boxing boots and shared shorts etc. His fighters were guaranteed to last no more than two rounds in any fight. OK the Tarnow card was not as bad as that as it had Masternak on but it was not a good advert for boxing.

The 10-8 marking of a round when a knockdown is scored could be said to have cost Cobia Breedy a possible world title shot. He was knocked down in each of the first two rounds. That would put Tugstsogt Nyambayar in front 20-18. One judge had Breedy winning 115-111but the other two had it 114-113 and 114-112 for Nyambayar but if you just take the scores on the ten remaining rounds it come out at 95-94 and 97-91 for Breedy and 94-94.