

The Past Week in Action 20 October 2020

Highlights:

- Teo Lopez takes unanimous decision over Vasyl Lomachenko to unify the IBF, WBA and WBO title and to win the WBC Franchise title**
- Lewis Ritson takes controversial decision over former IBF lightweight Miguel Vazquez**
- Arnold Barboza outpoints Alex Saucedo**
- Edgar Berlanga edges closer to a record as he stops Lanell Bellows for his fifteenth consecutive first round win since turning professional**
- South African Thulani Mbenge returns with a win but Xolisani suffers shock loss against Prince Dlomo**

World Title/Major Shows

17 October

Las Vegas, NV, USA: Light: Teo Lopez (16-0) W PTS 12 Vasyl Lomachenko (14-2). Super Light: Arnold Barboza (25-0) W PTS 10 Alex Saucedo (30-2). Super Light: Josue Vargas (18-1) W PTS 10 Kendo Castaneda (17-3). Super Middle: Edgar Berlanga (15-0) W TKO 1 Lanell Bellows (20-6-3,1ND). Feather: Jose Durantes Vivas (20-1) W TKO 1 John Moralde (23-4).

Lopez vs. Lomachenko

Lopez unifies the IBF, WBA and WBO titles (and the WBC Franchise title) with a unanimous decision over Lomachenko who wastes his chance of victory with a too slow start as he throws away seven of the first eight rounds on two cards and all eight on the third.

Round 1

Lopez landed the first punch of the fight a right to the body on a retreating Lomachenko. Lopez managed to land two more punches to the body on a moving Lomachenko who simply

gave the round away by hardly throwing a punch at all and not landing one.

Score: 10-9 Lopez

Round 2

Lopez made a lively start clubbing Lomachenko with a right to the head and following that with some body punches.

Lomachenko was constantly on the retreat with Lopez tracking him. Lomachenko connected with two left counters to make it close but did not do enough to take the round.

Score: 10-9 Lopez

Lopez 20-18

Round 3

Lopez scores with a couple of body punches at the start of the round as he continued to shadow the retreating Lomachenko. Lopez landed a couple of punches to the body late in the round and although Lomachenko started to come forward he was not throwing enough punches.

Score: 10-9 Lopez

Lopez 30-27

Round 4

A dire round with very little action from either fighter. What punches were landed came from Lopez who at least was throwing punches even if short with most and with Lomachenko suffering from punch constipation only prodding out some light jabs. The statistics told the tale with Lopez having thrown 149 punches and scored with 35 and Lomachenko thrown 36 and landed 13. This was an important fight but not an entertaining one. You can't win rounds if you don't throw punches

Score: 10-9 Lopez

Lopez 40-36

Official Scores: Judge Tim Cheatham 40-36 Lopez, Judge Julie Lederman 40-36 Lopez, Judge Steve Weisfeld 40-36

Lopez

Round 5

Again it was Lopez tracking the back-peddling Lomachenko. Lopez scored with a couple of strong body punches and a right to the head and that was enough to give him a round in which

the number of punches Lomachenko threw was in single figures.

Score: 10 9 Lopez

Lopez 50-45

Round 6

Lomachenko showed some more life at the start of this round coming forward scoring with jabs. However he then went back on the retreat and Lopez finished the round strongly with some body punches

Score: 10-9 Lopez

Lopez 60-54

Round 7

A punch in the second round had started a reddening under Lopez's left eye and it was now a small swelling. As in the sixth Lomachenko again was more positive early and scored with a right cross which was the best punch he had landed so far. After that Lopez was finding the target with hard single punches to take the round.

Score: 10-09 Lopez

Lopez 70-63

Round 8

Finally a fight broke out. Lomachenko was coming forward looking to take the fight to Lopez. He was throwing more punches and putting together some sharp combinations catching Lopez with two powerful lefts to the head. Lopez was caught out by the change of tactics and was too slow with counters. But was it going to prove that Lomachenko had already given away too many rounds?

Score: 10-9 Lomachenko

Lopez 79-73

Official Scores: Judge Tim Cheatham 79-73 Lopez, Judge Julie Lederman 80-72 Lopez, Judge Steve Weisfeld 79-73 Lopez.

Round 9

Another round for Lomachenko. He was taking the fight to Lopez scoring with snappy jabs and then putting together little bursts of punches. Lopez looked much less composed on the back foot. He was still dangerous but was off target with his punches.

Score: 10-9 Lomachenko

Lopez 88-83

Round 10

Lomachenko was in control of the fight now. He was coming forward throwing punches connecting with jabs then two/three punch bursts. Lopez was on the back foot and being outscored. A low punch caused a break in the action just before the bell as Lomachenko was given some recovery time.

Score: 10-9 Lomachenko

Lopez 97-93

Round 11

Lomachenko was hustling and chasing down Lopez. He was putting his punches together well with Lopez restricted to one punch at a time. Lomachenko kept up the pressure until late in the round when Lopez connected with some hard body punches but it was Lomachenko's round

Score: 10-9 Lomachenko

Lopez 106-103

Round 12

Lomachenko gave it a try in the last round and started well but then Lopez produced a strong finish as he drove Lomachenko back with hooks and uppercuts over the last half of the round. Just before the bell Lopez suffered a bad cut on his right eyelid. If that had happened earlier then the fight would have had to be stopped but with just seconds to go the doctor allowed the fight to continue and Lopez drove his way to victory.

Score: 10-9 Lopez

Lopez 116-112

Official Scores: Judge Tim Cheatham 116-112 Lopez, Judge Julie Lederman 119-109 Lopez, Judge Steve Weisfeld 117-111 Lopez.

Lopez was a deserving winner although to me not nearly as wide a margin as that shown in the score of experienced Judge Julie Lederman who has been severely criticised for her score. However the main culprit here was Lomachenko who had obviously planned to start slow and then come on strong. The Lomachenko of the first seven rounds was nothing like the one we are used to and even at the end some of the clever movement and fast combinations were missing. Lopez pressed

hard from the start and received the reward his effort deserved. Many take the view that if there is a return (although I understand there was no return clause in the contract) then Lomachenko will take on board his mistakes from this fight and emerge then winner. If there is a return let's just hope it will be more entertaining fight than this one. The question of whether Lopez is now world champion of all four sanctioning bodies is in doubt. It is disingenuous of the WBC to describe Devin Haney in their official ratings as World Champion and then say Lopez has won the WBC world title. If the WBC world champion does not hold the WBC world title what title does he hold?

Barboza vs. Saucedo

Barboza continues his progress towards a world title shot late in 2021 with convincing unanimous decision over WBO No 6 Saucedo. Barboza began the fight with a southpaw guard as they were both looking to dominate. Barboza scored early with a strong left hook with Saucedo digging in left hooks to the body. The high pace continued in the second with Saucedo knocking Barboza off balance with a left hook but Barboza, still fighting southpaw, scored with some hard straight lefts. Barboza started to open a gap in the points from the third with some fast combinations and in the fourth outworked Saucedo and connected with some heavy rights to the head. The pace was still hot in the fifth with Saucedo marching forward landing with hooks and Barboza getting through with the heavier punches in heated exchanges. It was close-quarters stuff throughout the sixth with Saucedo swarming forward chucking hooks and Barboza more accurate and landing the harder punches but Saucedo just having the edge. The action slowed a little in the seventh with a moment of controversy. As Barboza backed out of an exchange Saucedo landed with a left and Barboza dropped to his haunches in a corner and put his left glove on the canvas to steady himself. The referee ruled it a slip but at the end of the round the Nevada Commission's replay representative informed the referee it was a genuine

knockdown so it was a 10-8 round for Saucedo. That made the scores close but Barboza took the eighth and ninth and rocked Saucedo a couple of times in the tenth although Saucedo fought hard all the way. Scores 97-92 twice and 96-93 for Barboza. The 28-year-old Californian has wins over Mike Reid, Mike Alvarado and Tony Luis and is rated WBC 7/WBO 7 Mexican Saucedo, 26, lost on a seventh round TKO when challenging Maurice Hooker for the WBO title in 2018 but had rebuilt well with victories against Rod Salka and Sonny Fredrickson.

Vargas vs. Castaneda

The speed and skill of Vargas are just too much for Castaneda as Vargas eases his way to a wide unanimous verdict. Southpaw Vargas controlled the action from the first bell. He was snapping out his jab and firing quick combinations with Castaneda waiting too long to let his punches go. In the second Vargas put Castaneda down with a straight left. It was not a heavy knockdown and Castaneda was in no real trouble when he arose. The knockdown gave Vargas a good lead and he built on that over the middle rounds being quicker to the punch and frustrating Castaneda's attempts to cut off the ring using quick footwork and clever upper body movement. Castaneda connected with a solid right in the sixth with that being the best he could manage against a slick Vargas. Not a big puncher Vargas looked to be trying to boost his Ko% with a big effort in the eighth but Castaneda continued to come forward and never really looked in any trouble as Vargas outboxed him over the last two rounds. Scores 100-89, 99-90 and 98-91. The 22-year-old Puerto Rican's only loss was on a disqualification and he has won his last twelve fights. Texan Castaneda has now suffered three losses in a row but in tough asks against unbeaten Yomar Alamo who took a majority decision and Jose Zepeda.

Berlanga vs. Bellows

Berlanga makes it fifteen first round wins in fifteen fights . Although giving away a lot of height and reach Bellows scored first connecting with a couple of sharp jabs. Berlanga missed with a three right crosses as Bellows stepped inside them. Berlanga was loading up on every punch with a couple whistling past the chin of Bellows. He connected with two rights which shook Bellows and then unloaded a series of head punches that had Bellows staggering across the ring and the referee stepped in and stopped the fight. Berlanga, 23, Brooklyn-born of Puerto Rican antecedents can certainly punch and this is the first time Bellows, who had won his last two fights, has been stopped. Berlanga marches on hopefully to another test.

Vivas vs. Moralde

Vivas annihilates Moralde. Mexican Vivas came out throwing a storm of punches immediately putting Moralde on the back foot. As he marched forward Moralde landed some hard counters but Vivas shook them off and floored Moralde with a left to the head. Moralde beat the count but a huge right to the chin sent him back to the ropes and two left hooks to the body sent him down and the referee stopped the fight. All over in 76 seconds. The only loss Vivas has suffered was a wide decision against world title challenger Ruben Villa in September last year and this is his third win as he rebuilds, Filipino Moralde has now lost three fights by KO/TKO but his losses have been to a very good level of opposition including Toka Khan Clary, WBO champion Jamel Herring and unbeaten Xavier Martinez.

15 October

Minsk, Belarus: Super Light: Eduard Troyanovsky (29-2) W PTS 10 Renald Garrido (25-28-3).Light: Elnur Samedov (11-1) W TKO 8 Alexander Podolsky (11-2). Super Middle: Germaine Brown (9-0) W PTS 8 Dmitrii Chudinov (21-8-3).

Troyanovsky vs. Garrido

"The Eagle" is still flying but not exactly soaring as Troyanovsky gets by the always competitive Garrido on a majority decision in this clash of veterans. The taller Troyanovsky started well boxing and keeping Garrido on the end of his jab and countering with some tasty uppercuts. Over the second half of the fight Garrido kept pressing just rolling forward towing punches and as Troyanovsky tired he was able to get past Troyanovsky's jab to work inside. Garrido had Troyanovsky reeling in the eighth and Troyanovsky fell into the ropes so it could have been scored as a knockdown but the referee just pulled Garrido off Troyanovsky and let the fight continue. Garrido looked a possible winner but Troyanovsky turned in a strong last round so it could have gone either way. Scores 97-94 and 96-94 for Troyanovsky and 97-97. The 40-year-old former IBF champion looked a spent force. He is No 14(13) with the IBF but is only going in one direction and that is not up. Garrido is Garrido. There is nothing fancy about the wild swinging 37-year-old Frenchman but on his night he is a handful for anyone. This is his seventh loss in his last eight fights but with a bit of luck he could just as easily have won seven of his last eight.

Samedov vs. Podolsky

Samedov gets off the floor to stop Podolsky. In a competitive match Podolsky had the edge early with his longer reach and some strong hooks. In the third Podolsky scored with a couple of hard rights on the advancing Samedov who stumbled as he moved inside and briefly went down on one knee resulting in a count. Samedov recovered and finally made his aggression tell. He wore down Podolsky before dropping him with a short right in the eighth. Podolsky got up but Samedov then drove him around the ring landing a series of unanswered head punches until the referee stepped in to save Podolsky. Only the third inside the distance win for former undefeated Russian champion Samedov. He was born in Azerbaijan but moved to

Russia when very young. Podolsky's only other loss was against Spanish prospect Jon Fernandez.

Brown vs. Chudinov

Despite being relatively inexperienced Britain's Browne floors and clearly outpoints a faded Chudinov. The Russian "Night Wolf" tried to hustle and harry Browne out of his stride but Browne stuck to his boxing and found the careless Chudinov an easy target. Browne had won his last three fights by KO/TKO and he gave Chudinov a taste of his power when he floored Chudinov with a perfectly timed right cross in the third round. Chudinov almost ended face down on the floor but he managed to break his fall with his hands and then got up quickly. He was very unsteady but Browne left him off the hook and missed the chance of a dramatic victory. Instead Brown boxed his way through the fight continually finding gaps for counters and was a good winner. The 26-year-old BBB of C Southern Area champion paced the fight well despite not having been past six rounds before. Chudinov, 34, a former interim WBA champion, is on the slide being 0-5-1 in his last six contests.

16 October

Kissimmee, FKL. USA: Super Light: Antonio Moran (26-4-1) W TKO 6. Emanuel Colon (17-2-1). Welter: Xander Zayas (6-0) W TKO 1 Anthony Curtiss (2-6). Light Heavy: Rafayel Simonyan (8-0) W KO 6 Eric Abraham (6-6).

Moran vs. Colon

Definitely a candidate for Fight of the Week as Moran and Colon go to war for six rounds. The fight swung one way and then the other as both have impressive percentages of wins inside then distance. The taller Moran was willing to work inside and for five rounds it could have gone either way Moran had more depth in his experience and had met better opposition. A series of heavy, accurate punches suddenly had Colon fall apart in the sixth. Moran raked him with a succession of straight punches

and hooks that had Colon reeling around the ring until two heavy rights dropped him on his back. He made it to his feet but was in no condition to continue. Mexican Moran was 2-2-1 going into this one with the losses being against Jose Pedraza and Devin Haney and the draw with unbeaten 17-0 Yomar Alamo. This is his nineteenth win by KO/TKO. Buffalo-based Puerto Rican Colon was inactive in 2018 and his three fights in 2019 were all first round wins so he had seen only seven minutes action in the last three years.

Zayas vs. Curtiss

Zayas pulverises Curtiss inside a round. The outstanding young prospect blitzed Curtiss with savage combinations driving him around the ring. Curtiss tried to punch back but was overwhelmed and the referee halted the massacre. Still just 18 Zayas, a former US Under-19 champion, is the youngest fighter ever to be signed by Top Rank. He now has five wins by KO/TKO, four in the first round. He was too young to be able to qualify for the 2020 Olympics and 2024v was too long to wait. With his talent he could be the star boxer of the 2020's.

Simonyan vs. Abraham

Armenian-born Simonyan breaks down and halts Abraham in the sixth. The strength and aggression of Simonyan eventually proved too much for Abraham. In the sixth Abraham touched down briefly from a right to the head. Simonyan then battered Abraham to the floor twice more and he was counted out. Azeri-born Simonyan, 26, makes it five wins in a row by KO/TKO. Third consecutive inside the distance loss for Abraham all against unbeaten opponents.

Plant City, FL, USA: Super Light: Ryan Martin (24-1) W KO 1 Hevinson Herrera (25-19-1). Welter: Jose Miguel Borrego (18-2) W TKO 6 Luis Florez (25-17,1ND). Super Welter: Cecil McCalla (23-4) W TKO 2 Fidel Monterrosa Munoz (39-23-1,1ND).

Martin vs. Herrera

Martin gets his second win of the year as he knocks out Herrera in the first round. The fight was over in 105 seconds and gives Martin his fourteenth win by KO/TKO. He tested positive for banned substances androsterone and etiocholanone (metabolites of testosterone) after his fight with Josh Taylor in 2018 and was given a four year suspension by the UK Anti-Doping Agency but the Agency is not recognised in the USA. Colombian Herrera is now 0-15 outside of his home country.

Borrego vs. Florez

Mexican southpaw Borrego makes it 16 wins by KO/TKO with stoppage of Florez and pushes the Colombian a bit further down the slope. The 22-year-old Borrego has won his last four fights. Florez has the distinction of being the only fighter to have beaten Miguel Berchelt. He did it back in 2014 and did it by stopping Berchelt in 99 seconds. It has been largely downhill since then with 8 losses in his last 9 fights.

McCall vs. Munoz

McCall makes it two wins in four months as he halts Munoz. After winning his first 20 fights McCall hit a bad patch when he moved up to face stiffer opposition and went 1-4 so has some rebuilding to do. On a bad night for Colombians Munoz drops to just 1 win in his 11 most recent contests.

Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania: Super Fly: Innocent Evarist (10-1-2) (?? see below) Prince Patel (23-1-1). Super Fly: Julius Kisarawe (32-7-1) W PTS 10 Msabaha Salum Msabaha (9-2-1).

Evarist vs. Patel

Evarist seems to have been declared the winner in this one after clearly outpointing Patel but subsequently that was changed to a draw. The 5'11" Evarist scored at distance with his jab and outworked Patel over the first three rounds. He was on the front foot constantly throwing punches with Patel under pressure and not throwing enough punches back. By the fourth Evarist's jabs had Patel bleeding from the nose. In the fifth

Patel began to apply some pressure of his own but he was tending to walk in behind a high guard and was being caught by counters on the way in. Patel continued to take the fight to Evarist over the sixth and seventh and was scoring to the body but Evarist was again the one doing most work. Evarist's punches were not heavy but they were scoring. Evarist had a good eighth round punishing Patel with jabs and hooks but was deducted a point in the ninth for careless head work. Evarist dominated the last three rounds with Patel just trying to survive and Evarist had another point deducted for a butt in the last. No scores were given but it looked as though Evarist had been declared the winner. There was quite a bit of discussion between Patel and his team and the supervisor and after the show went off the air it was stated there had been an error in the scoring and the result was a draw. Irrespective of the revised result this was a clear win for Evarist. He had lost on a second round stoppage against Patel in May last year when he was unable to continue after being hit low. He had never gone past six rounds in a fight previously but he was the stronger man at the end. It was a poor performance by Patel who had lost to Michell Banquez for the IBO title in July last year but then won four times and collected the ABU title. The WBO Africa and WBO Global titles were up for grabs (Africa is not on the globe?) so presumably they are both still vacant.

Kisarawe vs. Msabaha

Kisarawa outpoints Msabaha to win the vacant UBO African title. Scores 97-93 for Kisarawe from all three judges. Kisarawe was stopped in five rounds by Prince Patel in 2018 but had outpointed Msabaha in February last year.

Galapa, Colombia: Super Fly: Jose Soto (15-0,1ND) W KO 1 Angel Berrio (15-8). In his first fight for eleven months Soto destroys Berrio in the first round. The action was close encounter stuff as the exchanged punches inside. Soto landed a couple of hooks to the head that had Berrio retreating to the

ropes. Soto followed and landed a vicious left hook to the ribs and with Berrio already on his way down landed a couple of head punches but it was the body shot that really did for Berrio who was counted out kneeling on the canvas. The 22-year-old Soto, a former Colombian Youth Champion, has six inside the distance wins. Berrio has now suffered five losses and fought one No Decision in his last six appearances.

Karlsruhe, Germany: Super Middle: Petro Ivanov (13-0-2) W TKO 4 Yusuf Kanguel (19-4-1). Heavy: Evgenios Lazaridis (17-3) W TKO 1 Eugen Buchmueller (17-7). Super Middle: Juergen Doberstein (26-4-1) W PTS 6 Roman Hardok (6-2).

Ivanov vs. Kanguel

Relatively unknown Ivanov halts Kanguel in four rounds. Ivanov did enough to edge the first two rounds with Kanguel doing better in the third. Late in the fourth Ivanov shook Kanguel with hooks and uppercuts and a series of head punches had Kanguel collapsing into the ropes and down. He struggled to his feet but was unsteady and the referee waived the fight over. Kanguel tried to protest but it was a good stoppage. Ukrainian Ivanov wins the vacant WBC International Silver title. The 24-year-old was not too much of a surprise package having stopped then unbeaten French prospect Louis Toutin and won every round against experienced Roman Shkarupa. German Kanguel, 36, retired after five rounds against Vincent Feigenbutz in 2018 but had won the WBC Mediterranean title with points win over 18-0-1 Vartan Avetisyan in February last year.

Lazaridis vs. Buchmueller

This one was over quickly. As Buchmueller came forward and threw an overhand right Lazaridis came inside it and caught Buchmueller with a powerful right uppercut that dropped Buchmueller to the canvas on his back. Buchmueller tottered to his feet and was swaying on his legs so after the eight count

the referee signalled that the fight was over. The 32-year-old 6'3" Greek Lazaridis gets win No 11 by KO/TKO. He lost on points to Agit Kabayel in July. Kazak born Buchmueller, 40, loses inside the distance when he gets ambitious enough to step up.

Doberstein vs. Hardok

Another Kazak-born fighter Doberstein too good for Hardok and takes a unanimous decision. He had too much experience for Hardok having only lost on a majority decision over twelve rounds against Robin Krasniqi a few years back but he was coming off a seventh round kayo loss suffered against Juergen Braehmer in December. Russian-born German Hardok, a former German champion, was having his first fight for over two years.

17 October

Peterborough, England: Super Light: Lewis Ritson (21-1) W PTS 12 Miguel Vazquez (42-10). Super Bantam: Marc Leach (15-1-1) W PTS 10 Qais Ashfaq (8-1). Thomas Patrick Ward (29-0-1) TEC DRAW 8 Thomas Essomba (10-6-1).

Ritson vs. Vazquez

Although being 3-4 in his last 7 fights may make it seem that Vazquez has accepted the role of a useful scalp for the local boxer he showed here the value of experience and certainly looked to have outscored Ritson. The home fighter was coming forward from the start. Vazquez was comfortable on the back foot constantly moving and slotting punches through Ritson's high guard. Ritson connected with a sharp left hook but was not closing Vazquez down. Ritson upped the pressure in the second but the clever movement and accurate punching of Vazquez was often frustrating Ritson's attacks. The pattern of the fight did not alter much. Vazquez was throwing light punches moving in and out quickly and changing angles. Ritson

was doggedly determined marching forward and landing the harder punches but not enough of them. It was brilliant tactical work by Vazquez and the only question was whether he could maintain the pace over the twelve rounds. Ritson worked well when he was able to get inside but was not cutting off the ring and giving Vazquez too much room. Many of Vazquez's punches were no more than light taps and Ritson was blocking a lot of Vazquez punches but just not throwing enough punches himself. Vazquez's punch output dropped late in the fight and he was moving less. That led to a bit more success for Ritson but some clever ducking and weaving from Vazquez was still making it difficult for Ritson to score. Ritson pressed hard over the last two rounds but Vazquez countered well and looked to have done enough to win but no such luck/justice. Scores 117-111 and 115-113 for Ritson and 116-113 for Vazquez. Ritson wins the vacant WBA Inter-Continental title. It could be the judges preferred his aggression and harder punches but on this showing his No 2 rating from the WBA flatters him. Former IBF lightweight champion Vazquez, 33, showed there is still plenty of life left in him and he is capable of giving anyone trouble on his night but losses to Ohara Davies and Batyrzhan Jukembayev last year have also marked his ceiling.

Leach vs. Ashfaq

An upset here as Leach floors former elite level amateur Ashfaq twice on the way to a unanimous points victory. This was a fast-paced technical match between two good boxers. Leach was quick and light on his feet with Ashfaq looking to have the sounder technique and more power. Leach was using his speed to nip in and score and Ashfaq was trying to exert as much pressure as he could. Leach looked to be just in front after three rounds and late in the fourth he shook Ashfaq with a left to the head and then lunged inside following it up with another punch. Ashfaq went down. He protested he was pushed but was given a count. Ashfaq fought his way back into contention in the fifth and sixth. In the seventh a right and a

left from Leach unbalanced Ashfaq and he went down. He again complained that he had been pushed but it was a second 10-8 round for Leach. Again Ashfaq battled his way into the fight but despite a strong finish it was not enough. Scores 96-92, 96-93 and 95-93 for Leach. No title at stake but a big win for Leach. After losing his first pro fight he is now 15-0-1 in his last 16. A set-back for Ashfaq. In the amateurs he won silver medals at the Commonwealth Games and European Championships a bronze at the European Games and represented Britain at the 2016 Olympics.

Ward vs. Essomba

Disappointing end to an entertaining fight as a cut suffered by Ward ends the action and the scorecards make it a draw. Ward, the WBO No 3 was a heavy favourite over Essomba who was giving away height and reach and is a natural flyweight. Ward dominated the first two rounds but from the third fierce attacks from Essomba saw the Cameroons fighter get into the action. He gave Ward all sorts of trouble with hooks and uppercuts in the fourth. From there it became a much closer fight with Ward doing the scoring at distance and catching Essomba with counters and Essomba working feverishly and going to the body when he managed to get past Ward's jab. In the seventh a clash of heads saw Ward suffer a bad cut over his left eye and although the fight continued through the eighth before a punch could be thrown in the ninth the fight was stopped and the scorecards came into play with the ninth scored as equal. Scores 88-84 Ward, 88-85 Essomba and 86-86. A fight Ward will want to forget as he looks for a chance to challenge Angelo Leo for the WBO title in 2021. Former Commonwealth flyweight champion Essomba had lost over twelve rounds against world rated Sunny Edwards in August. He is never in a bad fight and as he showed here and in his win over unbeaten Sean McGoldrick he can be a handful on his night.

Miami, FL, USA: Super Feather: Mark Bernaldez (21-4) W KO 3 Julian Aristule (34-14,1ND). Welter: Brian Norman (18-0,1ND) W TKO 1 Juan Rodriguez (13-8). Super Bantam: Jorge De Jesus Romero (18-0-1) W PTS 8 Luis Valdes (7-4-1) welter Jameson Bacon (24-4) W TKO 2 Gonzalo Dallera (6-9). Super Fly: Joahnys Argilagosa (5-0) W TKO 1 Samuel Gutierrez (16-28-6).

Bernaldez vs. Aristule

Bernaldez batters Argentinian southpaw Aristule to defeat in three rounds. Bernaldez easily took the first round and it was obvious that Aristule was not going to last long. A series of punches from Bernaldez floored Aristule early in the second and he continued to hunt down Aristule before putting him down again with a left to the head just before the bell. In the third Bernaldez pinned Aristule against the ropes and pounded him until Aristule fell to his knees and was counted out. Fifteen wins by KO/TKO for the Filipino "Machete". His losses have all come on the road against good quality opposition in their backyard. Former Argentinian super bantam champion Aristule has been in with some good opposition but at 37 is way past his best and this is his fifth defeat in a row.

Norman vs. Rodriguez

Norman adds another inside the distance victory. The teenager from Atlanta blew away Rodriguez in 86 seconds of the opening round. Norman immediately took the fight to Rodriguez hunting him around the ropes and connecting with hooks to the body. He drove Rodriguez to a corner with a pair of left hooks and then landed a cracking right to the jaw that sent Rodriguez tumbling into the ropes and down to the canvas. Rodriguez struggled to his feet but was counted out before he made it. Norman, 19, the son of Brian Norman who fought Jean Pascal, Edwin Rodriguez and Dominic Wade, turned pro at 17 and has scored 15 wins by KO/TKO. Rodriguez is on the down slope with seven losses in his last eight contests.

Romero vs. Valdez

Romero remains unbeaten with points win over inexperienced Mexican Valdes. Romero pressed the fight with the taller Valdes willing to stand and trade punches but he lacked the power to dissuade Romero. Romero kept driving forward but never really had Vargas in any trouble and Vargas occasionally just leaned against the ropes willing Romero to bring on the pressure. He found enough gaps in the guard of the advancing Romero to be competitive but never really threatened Romero's dominance. Scores 78-74 twice and 79-73 for Cuban Romero a former Florida State champion. Romero was coming off a majority draw against experienced Daniel Lozano but did not show enough here to indicate he will be a factor in the division. Valdes, 21, just a prelim fighter who gave Romero some work.

Bacon vs. Dallera

Body punching from Bacon proves too much for Dallera, Bacon used a fast, accurate jab to box his way through the first round and shook Dallera with a sharp left uppercut. Dallera knocked Bacon off balance with a right in the second but then Bacon connected with a wicked left hooks to the body that had Dallera backing up and Bacon unloaded with hard punches to head and body. Dallera was stubborn and fought back until a left hook to the body saw him drop to his knees in agony and the referee immediately stopped the fight. Filipino Bacon, a former Philippines champion, returned to the ring last year after seven years out and is 4-1 since returning. Fifth loss in a row and eighth loss by KO/TKO for Argentinian Dallera.

Argilagos vs. Gutierrez

Cuban Argilagos dismantles veteran Gutierrez in the first round. A focused body attack from Argilagos soon had Gutierrez in trouble and he was floored and the fight was halted just past the 2:00 mark. Two first round victories in a row for Argilagos. The 23-year-old was a star of the Cuban team winning a gold medal at both the 2015 and 2017 World Championships as well as a bronze medal in Rio and was Cuban and World Junior champion. Seasoned veteran Gutierrez had

lost on points to former WBC flyweight champion Cristofer Rosales just 23 days ago,

Johannesburg, South Africa: Welter: Thulani Mbenge (16-1) W PTS 10 Mardochee Kuvesa Katembo (13-3-1). Light: Prince Domo (12-10-1) W TKO 6 Xolisani Ndongeni (26-2). Light: Khaya Busakwe (6-1) W TKO 3 Kabelo Bikitsha (4-2).

Mbenge vs. Katembo

Former IBO champion Mbenge returns with a win as he decisions Congolese hope Katembo. Mbenge had much the better skill set but was occasionally inconvenienced by the wild attacks of Katembo. Mbenge was a bit slipshod at times but his jab gave him a big edge and he was more controlled and accurate in his work. Katembo never stopped trying to pressure Mbenge coming forward throughout the fight but good movement and sharp counters from Mbenge piled up the points and he was a clear winner and collects the vacant ABU title. Scores 100-91, 98-92 and 98-93 for Mbenge. This was his first bout since losing his IBO title on a controversial decision against Sebastian Formella in Germany in July last year and with more action he will get sharper. He has wins over Diego Chaves and Miguel Vazquez and will be looking for some big international fights next year. In his last fight Katembo looked unlucky to have to settle for a draw with Obodai Sai in Ghana in August last year.

Domo vs. Ndongeni

Big shock for Ndongeni as in his return to action a careless moment and a booming left hook from Dlomo spoils his night. Ndongeni had a big edge in skills over Dlomo. Ndongeni was boxing well using his superior hand speed to score and duck around big swinging punches from Dlomo. Heads clashed twice in the second round with Ndongeni cut over his left eye. He passed a doctors inspection and continued to pile up the points working inside with hooks from both hands. He worked Dlomo

over in the fourth and a stoppage looked possible but Dlomo survived. Ndongeni had Dlomo shaken again in the fifth and was dominating the action in the sixth. He fired a series of punches but failed to see a huge left hook from Dlomo. When it connected Ndongeni dropped his hands to his side and fell backwards flat in the canvas. He struggled up at eight but collapsed into the ropes and the fight was stopped. Ndongeni had put together a run of 25 wins before losing on points to Devin Haney in January last year. He scored a domestic win in September 2019 and this was his first fight since then and marked his move up to super light. Dlomo was given no chance of winning here and had scored only four inside the distance victories but suddenly his Rand value will have soared

Busakwe vs. Bikitsha

Busakwe stops Bikitsha in defence of his Gauteng title. Busakwe scored with some good rights in the first and got the best of some frantic trading at the end of the round. Bikitsha's best weapon was his jab and he used it to keep Busakwe on the back foot in the second but Busakwe was stringing together some combinations. There was some lively back-and-forth action in the third until Busakwe cracked Bikitsha with a solid right to the chin. Bikitsha was badly stunned and went to the ropes and as Busakwe began to unload on him the referee stopped the contest. All six of Busakwe wins have come inside the distance. Bikitsha had lost on points to former Commonwealth champion Tshifihiwa Munyai in December.

Levallois-Perret, France: Bantam: Elie Konki (10-0) W PTS 10 Anuar Salas (20-8-1). Light: Yves Mendy (45-5-1,1ND) W PTS 8 Alain Sangué (11-4-1). Light: Yazid Amghar (24-0) W KO 5 Daniel Mendoza (11-10,1ND). Super Feather: Guillame Frenois (48-2-1) W PTS 8 Alexander Cazares (16-13).

Konki vs. Salas

European Union champion Koki adds the WBA Inter-Continental title with decision over Salas. A typical Konki fight as he showcased his great defensive work, his lack of power and his confidence occasionally bordering on arrogance. As his "Spider" nick name suggests Konki has exceptionally long arms and he used that reach to control the fight. His skill was sufficient for him to never be really threatened by Salas but he also never looked likely to win inside the distance. Scores 98-92 twice and 97-93 for Konki. Salas tried to walk Konki down and always worked hard whereas Konki occasionally surfed the action. Salas falls to 0-5-1 in his last six appearances.

Mendy vs. Sangue

Mendy gets in eight rounds of work against inexperienced fellow-Frenchman Sangue. Mendy rarely got out of third gear and at times looked for more from Sangue. Although Sangue had very little to offer he competed well enough to edge a round and last the distance. Scores 79-73 twice and 78-74 for Mendy. The 35-year-old Mendy is No 5 with the WBC having won 15 of his last 16 fights and having won and lost against Luke Campbell. Teo Lopez already has some mandatory defences lining up so Mendy may never get a title chance. Sangue had won his last four fights and was moving up to eight rounds for the first time.

Amghar vs. Mendoza

Former undefeated European Union champion Amghar given an easy night against Nicaraguan Mendoza. The visitor really did not belong in the ring with Amghar but he ploughed forward taking his punishment for four rounds. It became too much for Mendoza in the fifth and after absorbing a series of punches and then one left too many he dropped to sit on the canvas and he was counted out. After eight years as a pro and 24 fights Amghar has not really made much of an impression but perhaps he is trying to change that as this is his sixth inside the distance win on the bounce. Spanish-based Mendoza

has lost all five of his fights in Europe but this is the first time he has failed to last to the end.

Frenois vs. Cazares

French southpaw Frenois is getting to the veteran stage but still had much too much skill for Mexican Cazares. Frenois was able to coast much of the way and although he rocked Cazares a couple of times never looked likely to win inside the distance. Scores 79-73 twice and 80-72 for Frenois. The 37-year-old former undefeated European champion put together a 15-0-1 run before losing to Tevin Farmer in a challenge for the IBF title in July last year. He is No 9 with the IBF so has a faint hope of getting another shot. Cazares is 0-7 in his fights in Europe.

Fuerstenwalde, Germany: Super Welter: Mike Jaede (15-0) W RTD 6 Oszkar Fiko (33-29-1). Heavy: Djuar El Scheich (12-0) W RTD 5 Hasan Kurnaz (8-7). Middle: Ronny Mittag (31-4-4) W RTD 7 Taras Golovashchenko (3-4).

Jaede vs. Fiko

In a terrible excuse for a "world" title fight Jaede wins the vacant Global Boxing Council belt with victory over poor Fiko who retired after five rounds. The 27-year-old German has won 8 of his last 9 fights inside the distance but the opposition has been so poor they probably needed help to get in the ring as well as out. Fourteenth loss by KO/TKO for Fiko.

El Scheich vs. Kurnaz

El Scheich wins the vacant Global Boxing Council Inter-Continental title with victory over Kurnaz. Syrian-born El Scheich gets win No 11 by KO/TKO. All seven of Kurnaz's losses have come inside the distance and five rounds is an achievement as it is the longest he has lasted in a losing fight.

Mueller vs. Golovashchenko

A very welcome win for local favourite Mittag as Golovashchenko retires after five one-sided round. At one time Mittag's record stood at a very respectable 29-2-1 including a

victory over Conrad Cummings in London. But he has fallen on hard times being 0-2-3 going into this fight although in fairness the opposition has been strong. Four consecutive losses for Ukrainian Golovashchenko

18 October

South Kirby, England: Welter: Michael McKinson (19-0) W PTS 10 Martin Harkin (13-1). Bantam: Paul Butler (32-2) W PTS 8 Ryan Walker (11-3). Fly: Jay Harris (18-1) W PTS 10 Marcel Braithwaite (9-3).

McKinson vs. Harkin

Southpaw McKinson floors Harkin three times on the way to a unanimous decision. Not a big puncher-only two wins by KO/TKO-McKinson provided some power here. In the opening round he connected with a couple of rights to the head and an off balance Harkin went down. McKinson repeated the feat in the second this time using two lefts to send Harkin to the floor and he had Harkin down again in the fifth. None of the knockdowns were heavy and although being outboxed Harkin was competitive without every really threatening McKinson's mastery. Scores 100-88, 99-88 and 97-91 for McKinson. He has wins over 18-2-1 Evgeny Pavko and 17-0-2 Luis Veron and is No 8 with the WBO. Harkin was coming off a victory over unbeaten James Moorcroft.

Butler vs. Walker

In his first fight for a year Butler took the opportunity to shed some rust and get some rounds under his belt as he outpointed Walker. Butler was in control of the fight and connected with some heavy punches but Walker stuck to his job and gave Butler a reasonable level of competition. Referee's score 79-73 for Butler. Sixth undemanding win for Butler since losing to Emmanuel Rodriguez for the IBF bantamweight title in 2018 in a fight for which Butler failed to make the contract weight. He is No 3 in the IBF bantam ratings with No 2 vacant but as he

has not beaten anyone in the current IBF ratings Butler can't fill that spot. Londoner Walker was stopped in five rounds by Lee McGregor in August.

Harris vs. Braithwaite

A win but also some disappointment for Harris. This was to have been a defence of his British and Commonwealth flyweight titles but that plan was scrapped when Braithwaite was way over the division limit and came in to this at 116lbs. Harris got some useful ring time and Braithwaite kept intact his record of never losing inside the distance. Scores 98-92, 98-93 and 97-93 for Harris. This was the Welshman's first fight since losing on points against Julio Cesar Martinez for the WBC flyweight title in February. The former undefeated European champion is rated WBC 5/WBA 6 so still in the mix for a title shot. Braithwaite lost on points against Sunny Edwards for the British super fly title in February but had Edwards on the floor in the fight.

Asakuchi, Japan: Fly: Seigo Yuri Akul (15-2-1) W PTS 10

Seiya Fujikita (13-5). In a fight held over from March due to COVID-19 Akul retains the Japans title with verdict over Fujikita. Akul wanted to work on the outside but ended up fighting inside which helped Fujikita to compete over the first half of the fight. Over the second half Akul dominated to emerge the clear winner. Scores 99-91, 98-92 and 97-93 for Akul but Fujikita made it a closer fight than those scores indicate. The 25-year-old local fighter was making the first defence of the national title. Fujikita, 32, had won 5 of his last 6 fights but was in his first ten rounder.

Fight of the week (Significance): It has to be Teo Lopez's win over Vasyl Lomachenko

Fight of the week (Entertainment): Arnold Barboza vs. Alex Saucedo featured plenty of action with honourable mention to Antonio Moran vs. Emanuel Colon

Fighter of the week: Teo Lopez

Punch of the week: Has to be the left hook from Prince Dlomo that ended his fight with Xolisani Ndongeni. The right cross from Germaine Brown that dropped Dmitrii Chudinov and the perfectly delivered right uppercut from Evgenios Lazaridis were good contenders.

Upset of the week: I guess Lopez beating Lomachenko could be considered an upset but when it comes to the gap in class then the award has to go to 11-10-1 Dlomo knocking out 26-1 Ndongeni which gets my vote with an honourable mention to British novice Germaine Brown beating Dmitrii Chudinov also unexpected.

Prospect watch: Welterweight Brian Norman just 19 and 18-0 with 15 wins by KO/TKO looks worthy.

Observations

Confession time. I had been citing Tyrone Brunson's 19 consecutive first round wins at the start of a career as the record and over looked Yemeni Ali Raymi who recorded 21 at the start of his career. Raymi's opposition was beyond dreadful but 21 it is. He had his last fight at the age of 41 and was dead two months later. He was actually a colonel in the Yemeni Republican Guard and was killed on 23 May 2015 in an air strike on the Yemeni capital during the Yemeni civil war.

Nevada made use of a "replay representative" over the weekend and his review resulted in what the referee had termed a slip as in fact a legitimate knockdown. This was also employed on Rodney Berman's show in South Africa with Hall of Fame ring official Stanley Christodoulou as the replay representatives. It is good to see technology being used where it rights a wrong.

Cuba might not mind too much if some of their top amateurs defect when past their best but that can be the case for Robeisy Ramirez and Joahnys Argilagos. Ramirez 26 is a two-time Olympic gold medallist and former Pan American Games

winner and Argilagos, 23, won gold medals at the World Junior Championships and at the 2015 and 2017 World Championships as well as taking bronze at the 2016 Olympics. Those defections must have been blows the Cuba's medal hopes at future events.

Next time Devin Haney fights he will have to be introduced as the WBC champion-who ummmm does not hold the WBC title!!