

The Past Week in Action 25 October 2020

Highlights:

- Juan Francisco Estrada retains the WBC super flyweight title with late stoppage of Carlos Cuadras
- Roman Gonzalez scores wide unanimous decision over Israel Gonzalez in WBA super flyweight title defence
- Julio Cesar Martinez stops Moises Calleros who comes in overweight for their WBC flyweight title fight
- Sergei Lipinets and Custio Clayton fight to a majority draw so the interim IBF welterweight title remains vacant
- Dilan Prasovic stops Edin Puhalo in WBO cruiserweight final eliminator
- Australia's Jai Opetaia gets win No 21 and heavyweight hope Justis Huni wins the Australian title in his first pro fight
- Fabio Turchi, Xavier Martinez and Subriel Matias score wins

World Title/Major Shows

23 October

Mexico City, Mexico: Super Fly: Juan Francisco Estrada (41-3) W TKO 11 Carlos Cuadras (39-4-1). Super Fly: Roman Gonzalez (50-2) W PTS 12 Israel Gonzalez (25-4). Fly: Julio Cesar Martinez (17-1,1ND) W TKO 2 Moises Calleros (33-10-1). Super Middle: Diego Pacheco (10-0) W TKO 2 Juan Mendez (12-3-2).

Estrada vs. Cuadras

Estrada retains the WBC title as he fights back after a slow start and an early knockdown to wear out and stop a tremendously courageous and competitive Cuadras in a return contest that has to be a candidate for Fight of the Year.

Round 1

These two know each other well so no study time needed. Cuadras made a confident start coming in behind a double jab with straight rights. He constantly pierced Estrada's guard and ended the round with a blazing attack.

Score: 10-9 Cuadras

Round 2

The second was closer. Estrada was marching forward scoring with hooks to the body over the first half of the round. Over the second half Cuadras was again on target with hard jabs and clubbing right to Estrada's head and took the round.

Score: 10-9 Cuadras

Cuadras 20-18

Round 3

A big round for Cuadras. Again he was controlling the action with his jab. He was also working well with his left hook and straight rights. Estrada was effective with left hooks but late in the round a left hook from Cuadras sent Estrada tumbling back into the ropes. He used his gloves to avoid going all of the way down and was given a count. Cuadras piled into Estrada after the count but Estrada fought him off.

Score: 10-8 Cuadras

Cuadras 30-26

Round 4

An already entertaining match livened up even more in the fourth. Estrada came out throwing punches from the bell. He was just walking through the jab of Cuadras and belting Cuadras with clubbing overhand rights, hooks and uppercuts focusing on the body and forcing Cuadras back and outscoring him. Cuadras replied with some short bursts of punches and connected with a good left hook late in the round but had been outscored.

Score: 10-9 Estrada

Cuadras 39-36

Round 5

The fifth was all action as they took turns to land heavily with both hands. The jab of Cuadras was not as potent as it had been and Estrada was able to connect with a series of left hooks and uppercuts to the body and rights to the head rocking

Cuadras on a couple of occasions. Cuadras fired back as they traded punches to the bell with Estrada bossing the exchanges.

Score: 10-9 Estrada

Cuadras 48-46

Round 6

This was a savage war of attrition fought at a frantic pace. Estrada was marching forward letting fly with a whole array of punches. Cuadras was rocked time and again and just kept on firing back. He finished the round with a strong attack but Estrada had already done enough to win the round.

Score: 10-9 Estrada

Cuadras 57-56

Round 7

This round was closer as Cuadras won the early exchanges using his jab again and connecting with hooks. Estrada gradually took control swarming forward pumping out punches hooking wickedly to the body and forcing Cuadras on the back foot in yet another exciting round.

Score: 10-9 Estrada

TIED 66-66

Round 8

Once again Cuadras was getting the better of the exchanges early but the relentless attacks of Estrada forced him to back off. Estrada raked Cuadras with punches shaking him with a left hook and it was usually Cuadras who broke off the exchanges but each time it looked as though Estrada might overwhelm him Cuadras battled back.

Score: 10-9 Estrada

Estrada 76-75

Round 9

The pressure was getting to Cuadras. Estrada was coming forward loading up on his punches bombarding Cuadras with heavy hooks and uppercuts. Cuadras was fighting in short fiery bursts of eight or ten punches at a time but without direction or power and he was tiring from the pace Estrada was setting.

Score: 10-9 Estrada

Estrada 86-84

Round 10

Another great round. Cuadras showed why he had been a world champion as he dredged up the energy to move more

and still pump out rapid bunches of punches. Estrada was walking through whatever Cuadras threw and connecting with solid punches to head and body but this time he had been outworked although the effort drained what energy Cuadras had left.

Score: 10-9 Cuadras

Estrada 95-94

Round 11

Estrada jumped on Cuadras from the bell and drove him back before connecting with a left hook that had Cuadras falling back to the floor against the ropes. He was up quickly and after the count Estrada drove him around the ring piling on hooks and uppercuts. Cuadras was floundering but stopped to fire a counter only to get nailed by a powerful right that again put him down. He sat on the canvas for a few seconds as if he was done but then climbed unsteadily to his feet. The referee decided he was able to continue although he looked to have nothing left. Despite his exhaustion he stood with Estrada trading punches until two left hooks to the head had him staggering back across the ring and the fight was stopped after a truly memorable contest.

Estrada was making the second defence of his WBC title. This defence was his first contest for 14 months which might explain his slow start. He is 15-1 in his last 16 fights many of them title fights against the best in the world. He has reversed the only loss in that sequence by outpointing Srisaket for this title. As Srisaket is No 1 in the WBC ratings it looks as though there will be third fight next year. Former WBC champion "Prince" Cuadras, 32, made six defences when champion and was 35-0-1 before losing his title to Roman Gonzalez in 2016.

Subsequent defeats against Estrada and Mc Williams Arroyo dented his reputation but his showing in this fight where he was very much in it until exhaustion and Estrada caught up with him showed he can still compete at this level.

Gonzalez (Chocolatito) vs. Gonzalez

The little Nicaraguan marvel (Chocolatito) Gonzalez makes a successful first defence of his WBA title as he pounds out a unanimous decision over Mexican Israel Gonzalez

Round 1

A good opening round from Gonzalez. He used his longer reach to keep pinging Chocolatito with jabs and connected with some useful left hooks. He used plenty of movement to frustrate Chocolatito's attempts to cut off the ring and when he was pinned to the ropes smart upper body movement dented Chocolatito's attacks.

Score: 10-9 Gonzalez

Round 2

Chocolatito turned up the heat pressing harder and doing a better job of cutting off the ring forcing Gonzalez to stand and exchange punches more. Gonzalez was firing jabs through Chocolatito's guard and landing left hooks to the body.

Chocolatito ended the round connecting with a series of rights to earn the round.

Score: 10-9 Chocolatito

TIED 19-19

Round 3

Chocolatito set out to overwhelm Gonzalez with an array of punches. Gonzalez was forced to stand and exchange punches and Chocolatito stayed in close punishing Gonzalez to the body. Gonzalez still found gaps for his jabs but did not have the power to deter Chocolatito.

Score: 10-9 Chocolatito

Chocolatito 29-28

Round 4

Remorseless pressure from Chocolatito. He was crowding Gonzalez and whilst still landing his customary left hooks the spectacular shots were straight rights to the head that snapped Gonzalez's head back. Gonzalez was throwing plenty of punches particularly rights to the head but Chocolatito waited out those storms and then went back to pounding on Gonzalez.

Score: 10-9 Chocolatito

Chocolatito 39-37

Round 5

Another round that followed the pattern of pressure from Chocolatito and spectacular but brief spells of punching from Gonzalez. By the end of the round Gonzalez was against the ropes covering up letting Gonzalez find gaps for his left hooks and not throwing anything back.

Score: 10-9 Chocolatito

Chocolatito 49-46

Round 6

A closer round as Gonzalez threw more punches and came forward giving himself some punching room. Other than that once again he was under pressure for all three minutes with Chocolatito bouncing punches off his head and banging home body shots.

Score: 10-9 Chocolatito

Chocolatito 59-55

Round 7

Gonzalez could be excused for thinking he was in a boxing version of Groundhog Day. With every new round there was Chocolatito swarming forward with his arms going like pistons. After firing a couple of fast combinations Gonzalez then went into his shell and by the end of the round was just standing against the ropes covering up and making no attempt to fire any counters.

Score: 10-9 Chocolatito

Chocolatito 69-64

Round 8

For a while it looked as though Gonzalez might get something out of this round as he scored early with more of his batches of punches. Unfortunately Chocolatito just shrugged them off and by the end of the round was bouncing punch after punch off Gonzalez who had gone back into his defensive shell.

Score: 10-9 Chocolatito

Chocolatito 79-73

Round 9

More of the same. Before the sound of the bell had faded Gonzalez found himself against the ropes and under fire. He kept trying to drive Chocolatito off and scored with some good punches but Chocolatito just kept coming back and eventually Gonzalez went into his shell.

Score: 10-9 Chocolatito

Chocolatito 89-82

Round 10

A round for Gonzalez. He punched with Chocolatito throughout the round. He was again firing bursts of punches but in this round there were more bursts and he sustained them more. Chocolatito was not throwing as many punches and on a couple of occasions punches from Gonzalez sent him back on his heels.

Score: 10-9 Gonzalez

Chocolatito 98-92

Round 11

Gonzalez started trying to pick up from where he ended the tenth. He was snapping out jabs and straight rights. Unfortunately that did not last long and soon he was under assault again as Chocolatito ground him down forced him to the ropes and worked him over with a variety of punches

Score: 10-9 Chocolatito

Chocolatito 108-101

Round 12

For three minutes these two knocked bits off each other. Chocolatito poured on the pressure and Gonzalez was determined to stand and punch with him. He was getting the worse of the exchanges but still urged Chocolatito to do his worst even though he faded a little at the end.

Score: 10-09 Chocolatito

Roman Gonzalez 118-110

Official Scores: 118-110, 117-111 and 116-112 all for Roman Gonzalez

The relentless pressure from "Chocolatito" just proved too much for a gutsy Israel Gonzalez. After two stoppage losses against Thai Srisaket in the space of six months in 2017 Chocolatito went from being rated one of the top Pound for Pound fighters in the world to being written off. He proved himself by coming back and beating Khalid Yafai to win the WBA title in February and even at 33 not too many will be looking to write him off any time soon. Israel Gonzalez fought hard and bravely but just did not have the power or the punch to keep Chocolatito out. He lost on points against Yafai in a title

challenge in 2018 but had earned his second title chance with a win over 28-1 Sho Ishida in Japan. At 23 he has a very good chance of getting another shot.

Martinez vs. Calleros

Martinez crushes over matched Calleros in two rounds. Calleros failed to make the weight so could not win the title but then he never had much chance anyway and Martinez again showed his power.

Round 1

Martinez was looking dangerous in the first with left hooks. He shook Calleros early and then with less than one minute gone another left hook knocked Calleros back and he put both gloves on the canvas to break his fall. After the count Calleros tried to move and jab but was staggered by a left hook to the head and had to absorb some more punishment before the bell of a one-sided round.

Score 10-8 Martinez

Round 2

Martinez continued the pounding of Calleros in the second and every punch he threw seemed to shake Calleros. For a period Calleros settled down to do some good work with his jab and take the fight to Martinez. That ended when Calleros became over confident and stood and traded with Martinez. A left rocked Calleros and a blistering right effective knocked him out on his feet. He fell back into the ropes and with Martinez pounding him the referee stopped the fight.

"The King" Martinez, 25, was making the second defence of the WBC title and showed why he is considered the hardest puncher in the flyweight division. Fourth inside the distance defeat for Calleros who weighed 5 ½ lbs over the flyweight limit. He went from unrated by the WBC in September to No 20 in October but still not inside the top 15.

Pacheco vs. Mendez

Pacheco destroys overmatched Mendez in the second round. The 6'4" Pacheco towered over the 5'9" Mendez and almost put

him down twice in the opening round. Mendez survived but some hurtful upper cuts in the second forced him to step back and go down on his knees and the referee halted the fight. The 19-year-old from Los Angeles has eight wins by KO/TKO including five first round finishes. Mendez just a sacrificial lamb.

24 October

Uncasville, CT, USA: Welter: Sergey Lipinets (16-1-1) DREW 12 Custio Clayton (18-0-1). Super Feather: Xavier Martinez (16-0) W PTS 12 Claudio Marrero (24-5). Super Light: Subriel Matias (16-1) W TKO 7 Malik Hawkins (18-1).

Lipinets vs. Clayton

The interim IBF title remains vacant after Lipinets and Clayton fight to a majority draw.

Round 1

Very cautious opener with neither fighter really committing themselves with their jabs. Lipinets was the one coming forward and he connected with a couple of body punches and Clayton did not throw any punches of consequence.

Score: 10 9 Lipinets

Round 2

No real action in this round. Lipinets tried some punches but was short. Clayton was constantly on the back foot and tried some jabs and long rights and made the better contact which was just enough to give him a nothing much round.

Score: 10-9 Clayton

TIED 19-19

Round 3

Lipinets landed a couple of body punches and a hard right to the head. He continued to track the retreating Clayton and pinned him to the ropes scoring with hooks to the body. Clayton tried a pair of right counters but was just not throwing enough punches.

Score: 10-9 Lipinets

Lipinets 29-28

Round 4

Lipinets was again trying to take the fight to Clayton who hardly strayed away from the perimeter of the ring. Lipinets caught Clayton on the ropes and landed with a four-punch combination. Clayton then landed a right hook to the body, the best punch in the fight so far and that gave him the confidence to come forward and score with his jab and a right to give him a narrow edge.

Score: 10-9 Clayton

TIED 38-38

Round 5

A good round for Clayton. He had just been probing with his jab but he started to use it as a weapon in this round. He was banging it through the guard of Lipinets and following it with some strong rights. He was still fighting on the back foot but Lipinets was finding it hard to cut him off.

Score: 10-9 Clayton

Clayton 48-47

Round 6

Clayton was using his jab in the early exchanges but eventually Lipinets was getting past the jab and Clayton retreated to the ropes. He was getting trapped against the ropes and Lipinets was able to bombard him with hooks to head and body with Clayton only throwing occasional counters.

Score: 10-9 Lipinets

TIED 57-57

Round 7

Lipinets spent the round hunting down the retreating Clayton. He was able to pin Clayton to the ropes and score to head and body with Clayton just covering up. Clayton landed two clubbing rights before the bell but by then he had already conceded the round.

Score: 10-9 Lipinets

Lipinets 67-66

Round 8

One for Clayton. He was using his jab as a range finder and it worked as he bombed Lipinets with three heavy right crosses. When Lipinets came forward Clayton countered him with body

punches. Lipinets was just not quick enough to cut off the ring in this round and had little success.

Score: 10-9 Clayton

TIED 76-76

Round 9

A closer round. Lipinets tried to press harder and had some success. Clayton kept sticking the oncoming Lipinets with jabs and connecting with right crosses. Lipinets did a lot better with hooks to the body when he managed to run Clayton down and just did that often enough to edge the round

Score: 10-9 Lipinets

Lipinets 86-85

Round 10

Clayton worked hard with his jab throughout this round. He was piecing the Kazak's guard both to head and body and connecting with clubbing head shots. Lipinets tried to fire himself up but was not fast enough to force Clayton to stand and trade and was getting caught with sneak punches.

Score: 10-9 Clayton

TIED 95-95

Round 11

Clayton outboxed Lipinets. His left jabs were snapping the Kazak's head back and he was connecting with fast rights to the head. He was showing how one dimensional Lipinets is and easily escaped from the ropes when Lipinets came forward and was quicker with his counters.

Score: 10-9 Clayton

Clayton 105-104

Round 12

Clayton's round. He stuck Lipinets repeatedly with the jab then stepped in with clubbing rights. Lipinets tried desperately to get Clayton to trade and was throwing some wild shots but Clayton was constantly moving and jabbing and then picking his moment to step in with right crosses and move on.

Score: 10-9 Clayton

Clayton 115-113

Official Scores: 115-113 Clayton, 114-114 draw, 114-114 draw

The interim IBF title remains vacant. Not a great fight. Clayton fought to win not to entertain. Lipinets was a slight favourite

going into the fight but in the end he was lucky to come away with a draw. If Clayton had been more adventurous in the early rounds he could have won this one clearly. Lipinets was a big step up in quality of opposition for Clayton so that may have guided his early tactics. Lipinets had lost a wide decision against Mikey Garcia for the IBF super light title in 2018 then scored wins over Lamont Pearson and Jayar Inson to get a No 3 rating from the IBF. Hopefully these two will meet in a return and with Errol Spence due to defend the IBF and WBC titles against Danny Garcia on 5 December and Shawn Porter at No 2 there will be plenty of time for a rematch before a title fight becomes possible for the winner.

Martinez vs. Marrero

Martinez gets off the floor twice in the eighth round to collect a close unanimous decision over Marrero. Although Martinez made the better start Marrero was quickly able to pull back that lead in a fight that saw plenty of close rounds as the ascendancy ebbed and flowed. Martinez built a small lead by the end of the sixth but both men were soon showing the marks of war around their eyes and Marrero had to pass a doctor's inspection at the start of the seventh. He was passed fit and Martinez attacked hard to add that round to his collection. The wheels came off for Martinez in the eighth. Early in the round a right to the temple sent him tumbling to the canvas. He was up quickly but after the count a wild attack from Marrero saw him go down again under a shower punches. Again he beat the count but with less than a minute gone in the round there was a chance there for Marrero to finish the fight. Martinez survived a brief hurricane of punches from Marrero who seemed to punch himself out and Martinez was the one coming forward at the bell. Marrero's chance had come and gone and although they fought on fairly even terms the rest of the way Martinez just had a slight edge. Scores 115-111 Martinez, 114-112 for Martinez and 114-112 for Marrero. Martinez, 22, was No 7 going into the WBA eliminator

and Marrero No 4 so it pushes Martinez a little higher up the ladder and Marrero slides a little bit down the snake.

Matias vs. Hawkins

Puerto Rican Matias returns after his first pro loss and stops Hawkins in six rounds. Matias was hunting down the taller Hawkins getting past his jab and firing hooks inside. Matias was using upper body movement rather than trying to block the punches from Hawkins and Hawkins was having trouble keeping him out. The flashy Matias often dropped both arms and when he threw punches Hawkins was never sure from which angle they were coming. Matias was warned for low punches but he was undismayed and just kept crowing Hawkins. He had Hawkins reeling on the ropes in the third and by the fourth Hawkins was holding more. The doctor had a look at Hawkins at the start of the fifth but the fight continued. Hawkins fought hard at the early part of the fifth standing and trading with Matias but in the sixth he dropped to a knee under an attack from Matias, He beat the count but took some heavy punishment. The bell went to start the seventh and Hawkins left his corner but before a punch was thrown the referee took him over to the doctor who advised the fight should be stopped. Matias has a rebuilding project after an upset loss against Petros Ananyan in February. Hawkins has scored wins over Ray Serrano and Al Rivera but found the talent and eccentric style of Matias just too much.

22 October

Fortitude Valley. Australia: Cruiser: Jai Opeteia (20-0) W TKO 6 Ben Kelleher (13-2-2). Heavy: Justis Huni (1-0) W TKO 7 Faiga Opelu (13-2-1).

Opeteia vs. Kelleher

Opeteia returns to the ring for the first time since November and takes care of some domestic business by stopping previous victim Kelleher. Southpaw Opeteia had everything going for

him: height, reach faster hands, quick movement and youth-although Kelleher did come to fight and had the classier tattoos. From the outset Opeteia used his advantages to score at distance. By the second he was bringing his left into play more often and stringing together some impressive combinations. Kelleher kept rolling forward but was too slow to cut off the ring and paid for that as Opeteia bounced quick-fire light combinations and some more solid straight lefts. If there was a fault it was that Opeteia was mainly head hunting. A frustrated Kelleher threw Opeteia to the canvas in the fourth but Opeteia upped his pace in the fifth mixing straight punches, hooks and uppercuts and skipping away from any counters thrown by Kelleher who was now cut over his right eye. Opeteia ended it in the sixth. He relentlessly bombarded Kelleher with head punches driving him around the ring for over a minute before, with Kelleher just covering up; the referee finally stepped in as the towel flew from Kelleher's corner. A sparkling, quality performance from Opeteia. The 24-year-old from Sydney has now won 15 of his last 16 fights by KO/TKO and is rated No 4 by the IBF but since positions 1 and 2 are vacant he is the second highest rated fighter behind Kevin Lerena and there is talk of a meeting of the two with the winner then being the mandatory challenger for Mairis Breidis. Opeteia suffered an injury to his left hand but it was not reported to be in any way serious. He was defending the WBO Global and IBF Asia Oceania titles but has yet to face a top level opponent with his three victims in 2019 being No's 320, 255 and 81 in the current Box Rec ratings but he looked really impressive here. He is talking about moving up to heavyweight eventually. Both of Kelleher's losses have come against Opeteia as he was stopped by Opeteia in three rounds in 2018 for the Australian title. The New Zealander had won his last six fights and gave it try here but the class gap was too wide.

Huni vs. Opelu

Opetaiia may have been the big name on the card but he was overshadowed by 21-year-old Huni who set a national record that can never be beaten as he won the Australian heavyweight title in his first pro fight. The 6'3" 240lbs local fighter was much too mobile and quick for Samoan Opelu. His movement had the stocky Opelu swishing air and open for counters. Huni poured on the punishment scoring with heavy single shots and some quick, accurate combinations catching Opelu with every punch in the book. None of it seemed to make any impression on Opelu who continued to march forward and managed to test Huni's chin particularly with a wicked uppercut. Despite the constant punishment Opelu just spread his arms wide goading Huni to do his worst and kept coming back for more. He was trapped on the ropes in the seventh with Huni unloading huge head punches when Opelu's corner finally threw in the towel. Huni is the first Australian fighter to win the World Youth championship title at heavyweight and won a bronze medal at the World Championships losing on a walk over due to injury in the semi-finals. He was beaten by much more experienced 6' 7" Uzbek Bahodir Jalolov in the final of the 2020 Asian/Oceania Olympic Qualifier but by finishing second still qualified and intends to fight at the Olympics in 2021. His aim is to become the first Australian to fight for the world heavyweight title since Alex Leapai who lost to Wlad Klitschko in 2014 and naturally to win it. He is certainly one for the future. Samoan-born Opelu, 26, was 8-0-1 before this and was making the first defence of the Australian title.

23 October

Milan, Italy: Cruiser: Fabio Turchi (18-1) W PTS 10 Nikolajs Grisunins (12-2-1). Welter: Dario Morello (15-1) W PTS 8 Nestor Maradiaga (8-9-1). Super Middle: Ivan Zucco (12-0) W RTD 3 Pavel Zgurean (7-5). Super

Welter: Mirko Natalizi (8-0) W RTD 3 Frane Radnic (11-19).

Turchi vs. Grisunins

After losing his unbeaten tag and his WBC International title to Tommy McCarthy in October last year Turchi needed a win. Latvian Grisunins, also a southpaw, was a known quantity having sparred with Turchi in the past and was a light puncher who had never lost inside the distance so was a good non-threatening choice as an opponent. Turchi worked his right jab well in the first and used a double jab in the second to open Grisunins up for a straight left that brought blood pouring from the Latvian's nose. Turchi increased his face in the third connecting with some crisp uppercuts and lefts to the head. Grisunins countered when he could landing a big left in the fifth but was under pressure throughout the middle rounds. A clash of heads saw Turchi cut over the right eye in the seventh. That made Turchi a little more cautious and gave Grisunins some encouragement but Turchi boxed his way through the last three rounds for an emphatic win. Scores 100-90, 99-91 and 98-92. This was a more restrained and technically better performance from Turchi than in the past. The loss to McCarthy has seen him drop out of the world ratings so he will be looking to rebuild although getting cut may delay his programme. Grisunins, 36, had won his last five fights and gave Turchi the work he needed,

Morello vs. Maradiaga

This night was to have featured the semi-finals of a EURO 50,000 prize welterweight title tournament but Morello's opponent fell out and the other semi-final had to be abandoned so Morello faced late import Maradiaga. Morello had too much skill for the limited but willing Nicaraguan. Madriaga did his best and when a left seemed perhaps to have caused Morello to go down in the fourth the referee did not count it as a knockdown. Morello is not a hard puncher and he relied on his skills and constant changes of guard to see him win the rounds

and take the unanimous decision. Morello, a former WBO Global champion lost that title to Luther Clay in September last year and this was his first fight since then. Fifth defeat in a row for 19-year-old Venice-based Maradiaga.

Zucco vs. Zgurean

Zucco again showcased his burgeoning talent against a willing Zgurean. Southpaw Zucco impressed with his speed and power and staggered Zgurean a couple of times in the second round but Zgurean also had some success with straight rights. Zucco dominated the third with the fire having gone out of Zgurean and at the end of the round he retired with a suspected broken jaw. Zucco, 25, rolls on with his eighth inside the distance win in his last nine fights and looks a good prospect. Italian-based Moldovan Zgurean strictly a 4 and 6 round fighter.

Natalizi vs. Radnic

Easy night for Natalizi as he dismantles poor Croatian Radnic. The Croat boxer was willing but woeful. Natalizi in each of the three rounds and Radnic did not come out for the fourth. Natalizi, 25, is a former Italian amateur champion and boxed for Italia Thunder in the WSB. Fifth inside the distance victory win for Natalizi but nineteenth loss in a row for Radic

Belgrade, Serbia: Cruiser: Dilan Prasovic (14-0) W TKO 9 Edin Puhalo (19-1).

Prasovic wins WBO final eliminator with stoppage of Puhalo in a poor fight featuring too much clinching and a lack of technique from Puhalo. Montenegrin Prasovic floored Puhalo with a left hook to the temple in the second and by the fourth Puhalo was bleeding heavily from the nose. Prasovic dominated the action before the fight was halted in the ninth round. Prasovic was on top in the ninth when a clash of heads opened a bad cut over the right eye of Puhalo. He looked at the referee as if to complain and Prasovic took advantage of that stupid mistake from Puhalo and landed a left hook to the body. Puhalo went down on one knee still complaining. He got up and walked to a corner and stood there

with blood streaming from the cut over his eye and made no attempt to continue so was counted out on his feet. The 25-year-old Prasovic has won 9 of his last 10 fights by KO/TKO and will now be the mandatory challenger for the winner of the vacant WBO title fight between Krzys Glowacki and Lawrence Okolie on 12 December. Prasovic has a good level of skill but that he is No 3 in the WBO ratings without ever facing any fighter within a million miles of any version of world ratings is a condemnation of the way ratings are distorted now. Going into this fight Prasovic's last three victims were rated 103, 235 and 309 in the Box Rec ratings and Puhalo's opposition had been so much worse that Box Rec rated him 76. Bosnia Puhalo had actually won his last 17 fights by KO/TKO but as with Prasovic his last three opponents illustrated the disgrace of his No 4 rating as Box Rec had them rated 231, 420 and 262 and with the WBO that's good enough to "earn" you a final eliminator.

Bilbao, Spain: Feather: Andoni Gago (24-3-3) W TEC DEC 6 Brayan Mairena (10-17-1). Middle: Jhon Jader Obregon (7-0) W PTS 8 Rafael Chiruta (17-43-1).

Gago vs. Mairena

Gago wins technical decision over a combative Mairena. In the first round the referee warned both fighters over head clashes and before the end of the round Gago was cut over his left eye. Nicaraguan Mairena had scored well in the first but Gago started to find the target with the harder punches in the second. They traded punches over the third with Gago again landing well but Mairena fighting hard. The referee deducted a point from Mairena for punches to the back of the head in the fourth. Gago was in control in the fifth but the tiring Mairena did not wilt. At the end of the round it was decided that Gago's cut was too serious for him to continue and it was stopped with the result being decided by the judge's cards with Gago in front 48-46 twice and 49-45. European champion Gago is 8-0 with one technical draw in his last nine fights and is awaiting a date

for his title defence against Gavin McDonnell with no date set. Spanish-based Mairena did his best here which turned out to be more than expected from a guy who has now lost his last 17 fights,

Obregon vs. Chiruta

Colombian-born Obregon takes unanimous verdict over the crude but always dangerous Chiruta. The taller Obregon used his longer reach to outbox Chiruta with Chiruta his usual wild self. Every one of Obregon's victims have had negative records but he showed good skills and has his eyes on a challenge for the Spanish title. Romanian Chiruta, 40, is a former GBU world champion and has sprung surprises in the past with inside the distance wins over Ruben Varon, Reece Cartwright and Davide Doria

Kissimmee, Fl, USA: Super Bantam: Belmar Preciado (21-3-1) W KO 1 Rodolfo Hernandez (30-10-1,1ND).Light: Otar Eranosyan (3-0) W TKO 4 Emiliano Garcia (16-6-1).Super Welter: Bryan Polaco (4-0) W KO 1 Ryan Favela (0-1)

Preciado vs. Hernandez

Preciado takes just 19 seconds to finish Hernandez. These two went at it straight away trading hooks and it looked like it might be a candidate for Fight of the Week until a wicked left to the body dropped Hernandez to his knees and he was counted out. The 32-year-old Colombian was having his first outing since suffering an upset inside the distance loss against Dennis Contreras in this same ring in August. Mexican Hernandez has now fallen to three straight inside the distance defeats but the opposition in the form of Yenifel Vicente, Jonathan Guzman and now Preciado has made it a tough road for him.

Eranosyan vs. Garcia

Eranosyan put Garcia down in the second, third and fourth rounds before the massacre was halted. After softening up

Garcia in the first Eranosyan put Garcia down with a right to the head in the second. Eranosyan continued to score heavily in the third flooring Garcia with a left hook. Garcia went down under a series of punches in the fourth and was then taking a pounding against the ropes when the fight was stopped. The 27-year-old Miami-based Georgian has considerable amateur experience behind him having won a bronze medal at both the World and European Championships and a silver medal at the European Union Championships. Garcia was 16-1 mainly against low level domestic opposition but reality has arrived in the shape of a run of 0-5-1 since competing outside of his home range.

Polaco vs. Favela

Polaco obliterates pathetic Favela in 44 seconds. Favela had no idea of how to defend himself and no footwork. Polaco cut loose with hooks and uppercuts before connecting with a rib-bending left to the body. Favela tumbled into and almost out through the ropes. He dragged himself off the ropes and down to his knees and was counted out. The 22-year-old 6'2" Puerto Rican southpaw had nothing in front of him here but he has the look of a fighter with lots of talent. Really Favela had no right to be in the ring at all-with anyone.

October 24

Massa, Italy: Fly: Francesco Barotti (8-1) W TEC DEC 6 Tommaso Melito (4-7-1). Feather: Davide Tassi (11-0) W PTS 10 Emiliano Salvini (19-32-2). 6

Barotti vs. Melito

Barotti wins the vacant Italian title with technical verdict over Melito. Barotti took the fight to Melito who boxed well at a distance but Barotti was more mobile and more accurate with his punches. Barotti moved in to the lead after a strong fourth round and Melito was cut over his left eye in the fifth. Barotti badly shook Melito with right in the sixth and with Meiito's

wound worsening the fight was stopped and the score cards. Barotti was in front on two cards 59-55 and 58-56 and the other card had them level at 57-57. Home town fighter Barotti, 28, scores his sixth win in a row and becomes the first Italian to be crowned as flyweight champion for 16 years. Melito had won 4 of his last 5 fights.

Tassi vs. Salvini

Tassi win the vacant national title with a wide unanimous decision over old warrior Salvini. Tassi had 4" height and a much longer reach over Salvini and boxed intelligently. Salvini kept marching forward but was being outboxed. Tassi had Salvini in deep trouble in the eighth but Salvini's experience and a good chin saw him survive and fight to the last bell. Scores 100-90 twice and 99-91 for Tassi to make it a home double. For Tassi this was his first ten round fight and first national title fight. Salvini, 41, is a former Italian bantam and super bantam champion and is 3-9-1 in Italian title fights across four divisions and has suffered four losses in European Union title challenges,

Fight of the week (Significance): Juan Francisco Estrada's win over Carlos Cuadras sets him up for some more big fights next year.

Fight of the week (Entertainment) Estrada vs. Cuadras a candidate for Fight of the Year.

Fighter of the week: Estrada for climbing off the floor and stopping Cuadras

Punch of the week: The right from Julio Cesar Martinez that ended his title defence against Moises Calleros was special

Upset of the week: None

Prospect watch: I will take a punt on new Australian heavyweight champion Justis Huni

Observations

It has been a long time since Australia had a real heavyweight prospect so there is a large body of expectation for Justis Huni to deal with.

Oh how times change. I can remember following the careers of great Italian flyweights such as Salvatore Burrini, Fernando Atzori, Franco Udella and Slavatore Fanni but those days seem to be past never to return. Francisco Barotti in winning the vacant Italian title on Saturday is the first fighter to hold that title for sixteen years-a dying breed-not just in Italy but some other parts of Europe

I watched with horror as Ryan Favela was obliterated in 44 seconds by outstanding Puerto Rican prospect Bryan Polaco. Favela had no idea of how to hold his hands, his footwork was nonexistent yet someone decided he was worthy of a boxing licence and someone thought putting him in with Polaco was a match worth making. I can't understand those mind sets-thankfully.