

The Past Week in Action 12 April 2021

Highlights

- Joe Smith Jr outpoints Maxim Vlasov to win the vacant WBO light heavyweight title**
- Jerwin Ancajas retains the IBF super flyweight title with unanimous decision over Jonathan Rodriguez**
- Jaron Ennis knocks out former IBF champion Sergey Lipinets**
- Eimantas Stanionis takes twelve round verdict over Thomas Dulorme in WBA eliminator**
- Connor Benn stops Samuel Vargas inside a round**
- Four Australian title fights in two days shows interest is still there for well matched national titles**
- Unbeaten fighters Mark Magsayo (22-0), Efe Ajagba (15-0), Albert Bell (17-0), Robinson Conceicao (16-0), Jared Anderson (9-0), Trey Lippen (17-0) and Duke Ragan (4-0) all score wins.**

World Title/Major Shows

April 10

Tulsa, OK, USA: Light Heavy: Joe Smith Jr (27-3) W PTS 12 Maxim Vlasov (45-4). Heavy: Efe Ajagba (15-0) W KO 3 Brian Howard (15-5). Light: Albert Bell (18-0) W PTS 8 Manuel Rojas (20-5). Super Feather: Robinson Conceicao (16-0) W TKO 7 Jesus Ahumada (17-4,1ND). Heavy: Jared Anderson (9-0) W KO 2 Jeremiah Karpency (16-3-1). Heavy: Trey Lippy (17-0) W TKO 3 Jason Bergman (27-20-2). Feather Duke Ragan (4-0) W PTS 4 Charles Clark (3-7-1).

Smith vs. Vlasov

Smith wins the vacant WBO title with a strong finish against Vlasov.

Round 1

Vlasov started with his hands low with lots of upper body movement and he was penetrating Smith's guard with jabs and hooks. Smith managed to land some left hooks but Vlasov was firing combinations and getting through with them. He connected with a series of rights before the bell but there was no real power in the shots. Smith had a small cut over his left eye.

Score: 10-9 Vlasov

Round 2

Vlasov was scoring with his jabs again but Smith crashed home a solid right cross that had Vlasov backing off. Blood from the cut was running into Smith's eye but he landed a heavy left and later another strong right. Vlasov was working hard but was not as effective as he had been in the first.

Score: 10-9 Smith

TIED 19-19

Round 3

Vlasov was back on target with his jabs and stringing together bursts of punches and was particularly effective with his straight rights. Smith was finding the perpetual movement of Vlasov a problem and was again pawing at his left eye to try to clear away the blood.

Score: 10-9 Vlasov

Vlasov 29-28

Round 4

Vlasov dominated the round. He was pumping out punches physically forcing Smith back and firing salvos. Smith was blocking many of the punches but lots were getting through and Smith other than a solid right to the head which was the best punch in the round was too busy defending to counter. The question was whether Vlasov could maintain the fast pace and perhaps there was a bit more style than substance in Vlasov's work

Score: 10-9 Vlasov

Vlasov 39-37

Official Scores: Judge Gerald Ritter 39-37 Smith, Judge Pat Russell 38-38, Judge David Sutherland 38-38

Round 5

Vlasov outworked Smith. He was pouring out punches. Many were blocked and again they were not powerful but Smith was being swamped. Smith battled back late in the round landing a heavy right hook but it was Vlasov's round.

Score: 10-9 Vlasov

Vlasov 49-46

Round 6

Another dominant round for Vlasov. He hustled and harried Smith around the ring raking him with straight punches and hooks. Smith briefly switched to southpaw but that did not help and he was under strong pressure at the bell looking a sorry fighter.

Score: 10-9 Vlasov

Vlasov 59-55

Round 7

Smith needed to find a way into this fight and his work was being hampered by his need to protect the cut. The real Smith showed up in this round. He rocked Vlasov with a right to the head and then marched forward throwing hooks, uppercuts and straight rights refusing to take a step back. Vlasov looked a lot less confident under the pressure and it was Smith's round.

Score: 10-9 Smith

Vlasov 68-65

Round 8

Smith started well banging out a succession of jabs and getting through with hooks to the body. That storm blew itself out and Vlasov took control forcing Smith onto the back foot. He continued to score with shots from both hands and jerked Smith's head back with uppercuts.

Score: 10-9 Vlasov

Vlasov 78-74

Official Scores: Judge Gerald Ritter 77-75 Smith, Judge Pat Russell 77-75 Smith, Judge David Sutherland 76-76

Round 9

A big round for Vlasov. He was able to push Smith around the ring scoring with rights and lefts. He twice pinned Smith against the ropes and unloaded a pile of punches and drove Smith across the ring with rights to the head. When Smith did come forward he was walking onto counters and was under

constant fire and relentless pressure. He was again trying to paw the blood out of his left eye and trudged back to his corner at the end of the round shaking his head. Both were now showing facial damage Vlasov with a bruise under his right eye and a small cut over his right eye and Smith a bruise under his already cut left eye.

Score: 10-9

Vlasov 88-83

Round 10

This round was so one-sided that a stoppage looked possible and a lesser fighter than Smith might have crumbled. Vlasov was driving Smith around the ring showering him with punches. Smith tried switching to southpaw and also resorted to head down swings but the punches from Vlasov just kept coming.

Score: 10-9 Vlasov

Vlasov 98-92

Round 11

Smith takes a controversial round. Smith was piling in throwing punches. A very tired Vlasov was only looking to clinch and throwing very little. Near the end of the round a right from Smith shook Vlasov. Smith then scored with a series of hooks and as Vlasov stumbled forward a punch from Smith landed high on the back of Vlasov's head and he dropped to one knee although it looked that that was due to exhaustion. The referee indicated it was not a knockdown due to the punch to the back of Vlasov's head and called a time out with just twelve seconds to go in the round. Vlasov stayed kneeling for twenty seconds and then got up and went to the ropes and stood leaning against the ropes talking to his corner men for another ten seconds before the referee indicated for the fight to recommence and the only punch Smith landed was one to the back of Vlasov's head which did not trouble Vlasov at all. There was no time left for Smith to do anything. Smith had landed three punches to the back of Vlasov's head earlier in the round which had no effect on Vlasov then.

Score: 10-9 Smith

Vlasov 107-102

Round 12

With both fighters exhausted Smith outpunched Vlasov in the last. He was swinging hard looking for a kayo shot and Vlasov was fighting back enough to be competitive but also holding a lot like a fighter who thought he only had to make to the bell to win the title.

Score: 10-9 Smith

Vlasov 116-112

Official Scores: Judge Gerald Ritter 115-112 Smith*

Smith, Judge Pat Russell 115-113 Smith, Judge David Sutherland 114-114.

***Judge Ritter credited Smith with a 10-8 in the 11th.**

Smith wins the WBO title having previously lost to Dmitry Bivol in a challenge for the secondary WBA title in March 2019 after which he scored impressive victories over Jesse Hart and Eleider Alvarez. I disagreed with the verdict. The CompuBox statistics showed Smith throwing more and landing more but you call them as you see them. Bivol is now the full WBA champion so a unifying fight would be attractive as would a unifier against WBC/IBF title holder Artur Beterbiev and Umar Salamov and Lyndon Arthur are being prepared for a final eliminator and of course a return with Vlasov is a possibility so options for Smith. Russian Vlasov, 34, had lost to Krzys Glowacki for the interim WBO cruiser title and then moved down to light heavy. The Glowacki loss was the only one he had suffered in his last 16 fights.

Ajagba vs. Howard

Ajagba ends this one with an explosive right that lays Howard out cold. The 6'6" Ajagba used his long jabs to get on top with Howard retreating and looking to counter but Ajagba was the one landing the punches in particular a long right cross that shook Howard. In the second Ajagba was using his jab to set up Howard for more right crosses but was overshooting the mark and Howard was short with his rights. Ajagba suffered a small cut over his right eye in a clash of heads. Half way through the third round with Howard holding his left arm low

Ajagba stepped in with a thunderous right cross that landed on Howard's jaw. He was out before he hit the deck lying inert in a twisted heap and the fight was stopped immediately with it being quite a while before Howard recovered. The 26-year-old Nigerian gets his twelfth inside the distance and is rated No 11 by both the WBA and WBC. He is a Commonwealth Games bronze medallist and a Olympic quarter-finalist. Second inside the distance loss in succession for Howard who was stopped in four rounds by Frank Sanchez in November.

Bell vs. Rojas

Bell outboxes an aggressive Rojas. Bell tried to blow Rojas away with a series of hooks and uppercuts in the first. Rojas rode out the storm and then fired back but Bell continued to land solid shots. Rojas forged forward in the second connecting with left hooks to the body. Bell was on the back foot slotting home jabs and countering well. The pattern was the same in the third with the skills of Bell just giving him the edge. A clash of heads saw Rojas cut on this forehead. Rojas continued to take the fight to Bell doing some good work inside but there were too many clinches with Bell tying Rojas up to prevent him working in close. Bell's superior technique gave him the edge but too often he allowed himself to be dragged into brawls and that helped Rojas steal a couple of rounds. Scores 78-74 for Bell from all three judges. A brilliant boxer Bell, 28, has beaten credible opposition in Andy Vences, Frank De Alba and Mark Bernaldez and is listed as WBO 12 and WBC 14 if there is a problem it is in the power department. Riojas is strong but limited. He has lost only one of his last nine fights and that was a decision against Felix Verdejo.

Conceicao vs. Ahumada

Conceicao batters a game Ahumada to defeat in seven rounds. It has taken a time for Conceicao to settle in professional boxing but he is now improving with every fight. Here he was jabbing powerfully cracking home body shots and could not miss Ahumada with straight rights. Ahumada took lots of

punishment. His defence leaked badly and never seemed able to get away from those right hands from Conceicao. He insisted on trying to walk through Conceicao's punches even if the Brazilian had lots more power. There was soon blood dripping from Ahumada's nose as Conceicao strung together some hurtful combinations. Ahumada began bleeding from the mouth as well and it was amazing he was still there after the heavy punches he absorbed but he never stopped firing back. The doctor examined Ahumada at the end of the sixth but he was allowed to continue. Finally in the seventh a left hook sent Ahumada down on his back. He climbed to his feet but the referee saved him from his own bravery and stopped the fight. Now eight wins by KO/TKO for the 32-year-old Rio Gold medal winner. Mexican Ahumada is now 3-3 in his last six fights including a ninth round stoppage by Stephen Fulton.

Anderson vs. Karpency

Another power show from Anderson. Karpency opened the first by chucking some wild swings which Anderson easily evaded. Anderson then walked Karpency down with jabs before connecting with a right to the ribs that saw Karpency go down on one knee. He was up at nine and managed to clinch to the bell. A right to the body put Karpency down at the start of the second and he was shaking his head and just stayed on one knee throughout the count. The 21-year-old "Real Big Baby" has won all nine of his victories by KO/TKO taking less than 20 rounds to do so but desperately needs someone to really test him. At least he got Karpency out of there quicker than Oscar Rivas (3 rounds) and Sergey Kuzmin (6 rounds) the others who have beaten Karpency inside the allotted rounds.

Lippe vs. Berman

It's now 17 fights and 17 wins inside the distance for Lippe but not much satisfaction for him in this one. Lippe came out firing putting Bergman under pressure and scored with body punches. He continued to attack but with Bergman taunting him he was ignoring defence and Bergman landed three quick

punches with the third a left hook sending Lippe back and down. It looked a valid knockdown but the referee indicating it was a slip. An incensed Berman argued with the referee that it was a knockdown and Lippe who had jumped up quickly stood and watched as Bergman harangued the referee for 20 seconds before the action continued and Berman looked to have rocked Lippe with the last punch of the round. Lippe scored well to the body in the second but looked uncomfortable when the 31lbs heavier Bergman applied pressure. Bergman was again taunting Lippe but Lippe kept his cool and score well and Bergman was looked gassed. Bergman was sticking his chin inviting Lippe to hit him in the third but when he stepped forward to launch an attack he collapsed to the canvas having turned over his ankle and was unable to continue. Lippe, 31, the son of the late WBO heavyweight title holder Tommy Morrison, was having his first fight since July 2019. Bergman, 36, had lost 5 of his last 6 fights with all five of his conquerors being unbeaten fighters.

Ragan vs. Clark

Just six rounds of fairly undemanding work for the outstandingly talented young Ragan. Scores 60-54 for Ragan on all three cards. No need to rush the 23-year-old from Cincinnati who has won every round in his fights to date. All seven of the guys who have scored wins over Clark were unbeaten fighters when he faced them.

Uncasville, CT, USA:). Super Fly: Jerwin Ancajas (33-1-2) W PTS 12 Jonathan Rodriguez (22-2). Welter: Jaron Ennis (27-0,1ND) W KO 6 Sergey Lipinets (16-2-1. Welter: Eimantas Stanionis (13-0) W PTS 12 Thomas Dulorme (25-5-1). Feather: Mark Magsayo (22-0) W TKO 4 Pablo Cruz (21-4).

Ancajas vs. Rodriguez

Ancajas makes a successful ninth defence of the IBF title with unanimous decision over Rodriguez. Ancajas faded noticeably but held off a late surge from the young Mexican.

Round 1

Southpaw Ancajas was a bit taller with a longer reach and began by jabbing to the body. He had early success as a left knocked Rodriguez back and he almost touched the canvas with his glove but stayed upright. Rodriguez showed quick movement but Ancajas landed with lefts to the body.

Score: 10-9 Ancajas

Round 2

Ancajas was working well with the jab and reaching out with lefts to the body. The fight suddenly burst into life when Rodriguez turned to complain to the referee about a punch to the back of the head and Ancajas took the opportunity to jump in and land some punches. An angered Rodriguez fired back and they trade punches with Ancajas getting the better of the exchanges.

Score: 10-9 Ancajas

Ancajas 20-18

Round 3

Rodriguez was letting punches fly early but then Ancajas settled down to score with his jab and long lefts. Again Rodriguez justifiably complained about a punch to the back of the head and when the referee ignored him another fierce exchange of punches started with both landing with hooks and uppercuts but Ancajas came out ahead.

Score: 10-9 Ancajas

Ancajas 30-27

Round 4

Rodriguez was taking too long to launch his attacks and Ancajas was getting his punches off first He continued to land with his jab and long lefts and bounced some sharp lefts off Rodriguez's head. Rodriguez scored with a good left late in the round but that was all.

Score: 10-9 Ancajas

Ancajas 40-36

Official Scores: Judge Tony Paolillo 40-36 Ancajas, Judge Tom Schreck 39-37 Ancajas, Judge Don Trella 40-36 Ancajas

Round 5

Ancajas outboxed and outworked Rodriguez. The champion was sending out a constant stream of jabs and nipping in with rights to the body. Rodriguez was fighting in short burst but every time he was about to launch a rush attack Ancajas was hitting him with jabs and Rodriguez had to set himself all over again.

Score 10-9 Ancajas:

Ancajas 50-45

Round 6

Ancajas changed styles completely. He went inside and traded punches with Rodriguez. He was ripping home hooks and uppercuts to the body and overhand lefts. The change of tactics suited Rodriguez who was able to do some scoring of his own with swinging hooks and uppercuts but again it was Ancajas getting the better of the action.

Score: 10-9 Ancajas

Ancajas 60-54

Round 7

Ancajas went back to his boxing. He kept his right jab in Rodriguez face, landed long lefts to the body and occasionally stepped in with a left cross to the head. A frustrated Rodriguez was never able to get close enough to land any significant punches.

Score: 10-9 Ancajas

Ancajas 70-63

Round 8

A huge round for Ancajas. He pressed hard connecting with clubbing shots from both hands. He was forcing Rodriguez back with Rodriguez bewildered by the storm of punches. Ancajas drove Rodriguez to a corner and pounded him until Rodriguez slumped to one knee. He was up at eight and with only three or four seconds left in the round the bell went before any more action took place.

Score: 10-8 Ancajas

Ancajas 80-71

Official Scores: Judge Tony Paolillo 78-73 Ancajas, Judge Tom Schreck 79-72 Ancajas, Judge Don Trella 80-71 Ancajas

Round 9

A great round. Ancajas set out to finish what he had started in the first round and forced Rodriguez to the ropes twice blazing away with hooks and uppercuts. It looked as though Rodriguez was ready to go but he kept punching back. As the round ended it was Rodriguez digging to the body and scoring with hooks and uppercuts and Ancajas looking to have punched himself out.

Score: 10-9 Rodriguez

Ancajas 89-81

Round 10

Rodriguez sensed Ancajas was tiring and he attacked hard throughout this round piling on the pressure and firing punches. Ancajas was landing plenty but he was being outscored and for the first time in the fight looking to hold rather than fight inside.

Score: 10-09 Rodriguez

Ancajas 98-91

Round 11

Rodriguez was swarming forward throwing punches. Ancajas had forgotten his jab and although still landing sharp counters his punch output had dropped and Rodriguez was scoring heavily with Ancajas the one to break off the exchanges as the swapped shots to the bell.

Score: 10-9 Rodriguez

Ancajas 107-101

Round 12

For the final three minutes two tired fighters just stood and patted each other with punches. Neither had any thought of defence and both were rocked a few times but in the end Rodriguez just had that little more left and took the round.

Score: 10-9 Rodriguez

Ancajas 116-111

Official Scores: Judge Tony Paolillo 115-112 Ancajas, Judge Tom Schreck 116-111 Ancajas, Judge Don Trella 117-110 Ancajas.

Right now with the No 1 and No 2 spots in the IBF rankings vacant and Rodriguez being No 3 the 29-year-old Filipino does not have any mandatory challenger. Because of the WBC super fly "tournament" his options are limited and there are no big fights to be had from the IBF list but as he struggled at the end of this a rest might be a good idea but he won't want to sit on the sidelines for another sixteen months as he has just done. Considering that Rodriguez had never faced an opponent remotely near to being rated he performed well showing strongly at the finish and it will be interesting to see how he develops.

Ennis vs. Lipinets

Ennis outclasses and then stops former IBF champion Lipinets in a statement making performance. Ennis is 5'10" to the 5'7" of Lipinets and has a 74" reach compared to a 67" reach for Lipinets. He also has quicker hands and is much niftier on his feet. All of those things came into the play in the first round as Ennis danced around a plodding Lipinets stepping in quickly to score with jabs and getting out before Lipinets could counter. When Lipinets did lunge forward Ennis clouted him with rights to the head. Ennis changed to southpaw in the second and scored with lefts to the body. Lipinets ploughed forward with his head down throwing punches but walked onto counters from Ennis. They stood and traded punches before Ennis switched back to orthodox and speared Lipinets with left jabs. They swapped jabs at the opening of the third before Lipinets managed to pin Ennis against the ropes and connect with some strong body punches. Ennis switched to southpaw and drove Lipinets back landing hooks, uppercuts and straight rights with Lipinets getting rocked. Lipinets came out swinging in the fourth but Ennis was changing positions and angles and firing punches with such speed that Lipinets never seemed to know where Ennis was or where the punches were coming from. As they fought inside Lipinets went down on one knee. He was up immediately and was given a count. It seemed more a case of

their feet getting tangled up but Lipinets did not dispute the referee's action. Ennis then connected with huge rights which Lipinets was just too slow to block. Ennis staggered Lipinets with a herd right but when he went to follow up a punch from Lipinets went very low and the action was stopped briefly for Ennis to recover and he then settled for piercing Lipinets guard with jabs to the bell. Ennis ended it emphatically in the sixth. He took the fight to Lipinets going toe-to-toe handing out brutal punishment before landing a stunning left hook that put Lipinets down on his back and the referee immediately waived the fight over. Scintillating display from Ennis in the way that he outclassed and then disposed of former IBF champion Lipinets. The 23-year-old from the fighting Philadelphian Ennis family has lots of both ability and power as this is his twenty-fifth win by KO/TKO. He was rated WBO 7/IBF 9/WBC 12 and with Lipinets being No 3 with the IBF he will certainly get a promotion from them. With this and other recent showings the likelihood of Ennis becoming a world champion has gone from perhaps to possibly to probable and on this showing almost certain with the "almost" only there because he is in the same division as Terrence Crawford and Errol Spence. He is also much younger than both Crawford and Spence so time is on his side. Lipinets suffers his first inside the distance loss with Mikey Garcia the only fighter to have floored him previously. He was coming off a draw in October against unbeaten Custio Clayton for the interim IBF title and with Clayton at No 4 with the IBF that might be a logical next step for Ennis. Kazak Lipinets never got into this fight to any degree and will now have some serious rebuilding to do.

Stanionis vs. Dulorme

Stanionis has to come from behind to win this WBA eliminator. Stanionis utilised his standard pressure tactics early with Dulorme using clever movement and outworking Stanionis at the start. They were both landing well with the rounds close and no one really able to dominate. Stanionis connected with a

good lefts to the head in the third and fourth and Dulorme banged back with solid body shots. Stanionis just looked to have edged the exchanges in the fifth but boxing on the back foot Dulorme did good work over the sixth and seventh. Stanionis came back strongly with body punches in the eighth but the ninth was a close round. A punch from Stanionis opened a cut over Dulorme's left eye in the tenth and then over the last two rounds he proved stronger and outlanded a tiring Dulorme whose vision was being affected by the blood from the cut. Scores 117-111, 116-112 and 115-113 all for Stanionis. The 26-year-old Lithuanian adds this win to victories over Justin de Loach and Janer Gonzalez but with Stanionis No 10 and Dulorme No 14 it is difficult to see this win pushing him very high in the queue of those looking for a title shot. It has been a switchback ride in his most recent fights for former WBO super light title challenger Dulorme. He has lost to Yordenis Ugas, drawn with Jessie Vargas, outpointed Terrel Williams and lost in a fight for the interim WBA welter title to Jamal James. He will now probably fall out of the ratings and I can't see him regaining that lost ground.

Magsayo vs. Cruz

Filipino "Magnifico" Magsayo adds another win. He had Cruz under pressure with left hooks in the first and then dropped him late in the second. A Magsayo left hook put Cruz down in the third and Cruz only just managed to make it to the bell. The end wasn't long in coming as a right from Magsayo sent Cruz down again in the fourth and the referee stopped the one-sided action. Fifteenth victory by KO/TKO for the 25-year-old Magsayo who is rated IBF 5(4)/WBC 5/WBO 8 so is very much in the queue for a title shot. Texan Cruz "The Lethal Mosquito" came in having won 7 of his last 8 fights

8 April

Grozny, Russia: Heavy: Jack Mulowayi (10-2-1) W TKO 8 Apti Davtaev (20-1-1). Super Middle: Aslambek Idigov (20-0) W PTS 10 Sherzod Khusanov (22-2-1). Light Heavy: Umar Salamov (27-1) W PTS Sergei Ekimov (18-2). Middle: Rizvan Elikhanov (12-0) W RTD 2 Mfaume Mfaume (16-8-2).

Mulowayi vs. Davtaev

Huge upset as unsung Belgian-based Congolese fighter Mulowayi wore down and stopped unbeaten Russian Davtaev. Mulowayi was given no chance here but he gradually ground Davtaev down. It was a fairly even fight over the first five rounds and then Davtaev started to tire. Mulowayi dominated the action from there and in the eighth round an exhausted Davtaev was taking heavy head punches as he stumbled along the ropes and with no sign of him punching back the referee stopped the fight. The 34-year-old ABU champion Mulowayi had lost a majority decision to 30-3 Herve Hubeaux for the Belgian title and been outpointed by world rated Frank Sanchez and did not look a threat on paper. Davtaev has been very carefully matched but the wheels came off in this one.

Idigov vs. Khusanov

Idigov returns home from his training base in Detroit and takes wide unanimous decision over veteran Khusanov. In a slow-paced fight despite Khusanov's edges in height and reach Idigov was always in command. Khusanov competed hard all the way without ever doing enough to steal a round. Scores 100-90 from each of the judges for Idigov who was defending the WBO and IBF European titles. The Salita Promotions fighter is No 6 with the WBO. Uzbek Khusanov, 41, had a 22-fight unbeaten run ended when he lost to 40-0-1 Damian Jonak in 2018 but had returned in September last year with a decision over 25-1 Robert Parzeczewski.

Salamov vs. Ekimov

Fighting in his home territory Salamov only just escapes being the second heavy favourite to lose on this show. At 6'3 1/2" he

had height and reach on his side and made a confident start taking the fight to Egorov. It looked as though the fight would go as forecast but Ekimov boxed cleverly using Salamov's height against by fighting mainly from a crouch leaving Salamov searching for a target. Despite that with his higher work rate Salamov seemed to have done enough to earn the decision but Ekimov fought hard enough to make it very close and to convince one judge he was the winner so Salamov had to settle for a split decision. It looks likely that Salamov, the WBO No 4 will go on to fight No 3 Britain's Lyndon Arthur in an eliminator to challenge the new WBO champion Joe Smith. After 18 consecutive wins Ekimov came into this fight on the back of losses to Ricards Bolotniks and Ali Izmailov so his form here was a surprise.

Elikhanov vs. Mfaume

Elikhanov keeps his 100% record of inside the distance wins as Mfaume retires in the second round. Elikhanov had been stalking Mfaume in the first but Mfaume stepped in and threw a series of body punches in the second. A left hook clashed with the point of Elikhanov's elbow and Mfaume backed off with his arm hanging by his side and indicated he could not continue. The 23-year-old has been matched sensibly with some experienced opposition. Tanzanian Mfaume is 0-3 in fights in Russia.

Tokyo, Japan: Welter: Keita Obara (24-4-1) W PTS 10 Shoki Sakai (25-12-2). Light: Go Hosaka (5-0) W PTS 8 Kanta Fukui (7-4-1).

Obara vs. Sakai

Obara retains the National title on a very narrow unanimous decision over Sakai in an entertaining scrap. Obara wanted to box but the aggressive Sakai kept driving forward behind a high guard to offset Obara's strong jab. Obara managed to put in enough good work to take the first two rounds but Sakai upped his pace over the next three to close the gap. After five

rounds two judges had Obara up 48-47 with the third going for Sakai by the same score. Sakai took the sixth to even things up but Obara's experience at a higher level saw him make the stronger finish to take the verdict. All three judges had Obara the winner by 96-94. The 34-year-old former IBF and IBO title challenger makes it four wins in a row. Sakai went to Mexico and turned pro there in 2010 and did his fighting in Mexico and the USA before returning home in late 2020 and scoring two wins over modest domestic opposition.

Hosaka vs. Fukui

Former top amateur (Takeshi) Go Hosaka was also returning home but had to fight hard to get a split decision over unranked Fukui. Hosaka built an early lead with his better boxing but Fukui began to cut into the lead over the middle rounds with Hosaka needing a strong finish to just deserve the victory. Scores 78-74 and 77-75 for Hosaka and 77-75 for Fukui. Hosaka was the first Japanese fighter to medal at the World Youth Games winning a bronze medal in 2014 and finishing fourth in the Youth Olympic Games in the same year. He joined the famous ALA gym in the Philippines and turned pro there before returning to Japan when the gym closed. Fukui was moving up to eight rounds and exceeded expectation in this fighting performance.

9 April

Buenos Aires, Argentina: Super Light: Fabian Maidana (18-1) W PTS 10 Carlos Cordoba (13-7,1ND).

Easy win for Maidana as he outpoints Argentinian champion Cordoba in a non-title match. With his superior power and a strong jab Maidana had Cordoba on the back foot and controlled the action. He found Cordoba a hard target and Cordoba used plenty of movement, constant switching of guards and lots of bobbing and weaving but Maidana keep pressing and landed with heavy lefts and right when he was

able to trap Cordoba against the ropes. Cordoba's attacks tended to be rushed and inaccurate and he was moving too much to really set himself to get any power in his punches. It was a frustrating fight for Maidana but despite the trickery of Cordoba he stuck to his task and dominated the fight. Scores 100-90, 100-92 and 99-92 ½. Maidana, 28, won his first 16 fights before losing to more experienced Jaider Parra and this is his second victory since then. He is the younger brother of Marcos Maidana. Cordoba certainly lived up to his "Little Fox" nickname but his tricks were no match for the better technical boxer with the heavier hands.

Sydney, Australia: Super Light: Youssef Dib (15-0) W PTS 10 Hunter Ioane (8-2-1). Super Feather: Billel Dib (25-3) W TKO 3 Jack Asis (38-24-5). Heavy: Willis Meehan (11-0) W TKO 1 Patrick Thunder (1-6-1).

Dib vs. Ioane

Dib wins the vacant Australian title with unanimous verdict over Ioane. Ioane came in 1 lb over the division limit so the title was only on the line for Dib who wins his first pro title in his first ten round fight. After being put on the floor in the first Dib settled down to outbox and outpunch Ioane to emerge a comfortable winner. Scores 97-92 twice and 96-93. Dib, 28, is the youngest of the three fighting Dib brothers. Second tough fight in a row for Ioane having been stopped in two rounds by unbeaten Jacob Ng after having Ng on the floor in the first round. He made Dib work hard for his win here.

Dib vs. Asis

Billel makes it a family winning double as he stops Filipino oldie Asis. The much taller Dib stopped the very faded Asis in the third round to retain the WBA Oceania title for the third time. Body punches did for Asis with three knockdown in the third. Dib, 31, makes it four wins in a row in his first fight in two years. It was also a treble for the Dib's as brothers Billy and Youssef had also beaten Asis inside the distance. Asis put

together a great run that took him to the IBO super feather title but those days are long past

Meehan vs. Thunder

Meehan gets a quick win as he crushes Thunder in 70 seconds. The 6'5", 25-year-old New Zealand-born southpaw has nine inside the distance victories, six in the first round, but his victims have been substandard. Meehan is also a professional rugby league player. He is the son of former WBO heavyweight title challenger Kali who came close when losing to Lamon Brewster on a split decision for the WBO title in 2004. Thunder with no chance at all suffers his fourth defeat by KO/TKO.

Mantova, Italy: Super Light: Arblin Kaba (12-0-2) TEC DRAW 4 Luciano Randazzo (15-3-4).

Kaba retains the Italian title with technical draw against Randazzo. The ending seemed lucky for Kaba. Randazzo had started strongly connecting with a series of hooks in the first and after an even second he had the better of the exchanges in the third. In that round a clash of heads opened a gash over the left eye of Randazzo. They started the fourth round but with the blood hampering Randazzo's vision the fight was stopped and with the fourth round not being completed it was ruled a technical draw. Albanian-born Kaba was making the second defence of the title but was coming off a knockout loss against Mohamed Khalladi in November so he needed a win. Randazzo was making his second challenge for the title and will probably get a third shot when his cut heals.

Auckland, New Zealand: Super Welter: Andrei Mikhailovich (15-0) W TKO 9 Shay Brock (13-3-2).

Mikhailovich makes a successful defence of the New Zealand title with stoppage of Brock. Mikhailovich was able to use his big advantages in height and reach to floor and then stop Brock. Mikhailovich was in charge of the fight flooring Brock with a body punch in the fourth and breaking him down. Brock

had some success with rights but Mikhailovich was just too big and too strong and the referee stopped the fight in the ninth. Russian-born "Renegade" Mikhailovich, 23, also holds the New Zealand middleweight title. Former champion Brock suffers his first inside the distance defeat.

Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania: Light: Hannock Phiri (3-0) W TKO 9 Yona Segu (19-11-2) W. Middle: Twaha Kassim (17-7-1) W Bebe Rico Tshibangu (9-1-3).

8

Phiri vs. Segu

Malawian Phiri stops local fighter Segu in the ninth round. Phiri had not even the slightest idea of how to box. He could not throw a jab he just walked and sometimes ran forward just swinging both arms. He ignored any punch Segu landed and when he was sent staggering back he just threw himself forward again. A big right swipe put Segu down in the third and when Segu got up he was staggering badly. When the referee asked him to take a couple of steps forward he turned away and stumbled into a corner. The fight continued and in the fourth a huge swelling appeared over the right eye of Phiri and by the end of the round he could only see through a very narrow slit and had to pull his head back to see through that slit. Despite all of this and despite walking through punch after punch his determination saw him through and although the swelling was grotesque in the ninth he landed a series of clubbing punches which sent Segu face down on the canvas and the fight was stopped. The 22-year-old Phiri wins the WBFederation African title and has won his three fights by KO/TKO I have rarely seen any fighter with less idea of how to box-but he won. Segu had been in with Terry Flanagan and had lost a split decision against 20-1-1 Armenian Vahram Vardanyan in February last year but he had no idea of how to deal with Phiri

10 April

Villa Gobernado, Argentina: Light Heavy: Abraham Buonarrigo (9-1) W PTS 9 Rolando Mansilla (16-8-1). Bantam: Juan Carlos Reveco (40-4) W PTS 6 Jeremias Ulibarre (8-12-1).

Buonarrigo vs. Mansilla

Buonarrigo wins the vacant WBA Fedebol title with unanimous decision over Mansilla. Scores 89-82, 88-83 and 87-84 for Buonarrigo the Argentinian No 7. Mansilla is 3-3 in his six most recent outings including losses in Australia and France.

Reveco vs. Ulibarre

Reveco returns to the ring with a points victory over Ulibarre. Gentle easing back for "Coton" as he wins on scores of 60 -53 ½, 60-54 and 60-55. Now 37 the former holder of the WBA secondary titles at light flyweight and flyweight was having his first fight since losing to Donnie Nietes for the IBF flyweight title in February 2018. Ulibarre sinking gradually and is 1-8 in his last 9.

Brisbane, Australia: Welter: Andrew Hunt (8-0-1) W PTS 10 Ben Kite (18-4-1). Light Heavy: Leti Leti (16-1) W PTS 10 Conor Wallace (7-1). Super Welter: Ben Mahoney (11-0) W PTS 10 Kris George (14-3). Heavy: Justis Huni (3-0) W TKO 1 Jack Maris (2-1).

Hunt vs. Kite

Tall southpaw Hunt scores majority verdict over champion Kite to win the Australian title. Hunt made an impressive start rocking Kite with uppercuts in the opening round. Kite worked hard to take the second but after a close third Hunt landed big punches in the fourth and fifth. Kite managed to work inside to avoid the big shots from Hunt over the sixth and seventh but Hunt scored with body punches in the eighth and despite the efforts of the more experienced Kite to hold and mess with Hunt inside the challenger finishes strongly. Scores 97-94, 96-94 and 96-95 for Hunt. New Zealand-born Hunt was taking a

big step up in facing Kite and was in his first ten round fight but he paced the fight well. He is of Samoan antecedents and represented Australia at the 2017 World Championships. Kite was making the second defence of the National title and had won his last 13 fights.

Leti vs. Wallace

Leti beats champion Wallace on a majority decision to collect the Australian light heavyweight title after ten rounds of total war. Southpaw Wallace towered over the 5'8" Leti but Leti was prepared to take punishment to get inside. Once there he was connecting with some serious body punches. Wallace's corner kept urging him to box and when he did he had some success but again and again he was standing and exchanging big punches with Leti. Both were rocked on occasion but also both were willing to absorb the incoming punches and fire back with their own. Leti was remorseless in his attacks and Wallace displayed an iron chin but Leti's body punching wore down Wallace and Leti made the stronger finish. Scores 98-93 and 96-94 for Leti and 95-95. Eighth win in a row for Samoan-born Leti. Wallace-born in Newry Northern Ireland-was defending his title for the first time. Three great Australian title fights on the same night all of which would make good return matches.

Mahoney vs. George

Mahoney wins the vacant Australian title with narrow unanimous decision over George. Things started well for Mahoney as a jab in the first round landed on the left eye of George which had him blinking constantly and eventually a swelling developed by the eye. Both jabbed well in a tactical battle with Mahoney on the front foot and George countering. Mahoney had George's nose bleeding early and the nose dripped blood throughout the fight. Mahoney's jab was a potent weapon which he used to open George up time and again. George was effective with uppercuts and overhand rights as he worked off the rust from almost three years out of the ring. George floored Mahoney with a left hook in the seventh but

Mahoney survived and fought hard over the last three rounds to take the decision. Scores 95-94 twice and 96-93 for Mahoney. Great win in a great fight for the 25-year-old Mahoney. First fight for former Commonwealth champion George since losing his title on a stoppage against Josh Kelly in June 2018. A fight in which George suffered two broken hands and a broken jaw.

Huni vs. Maris

Huni blows away Maris in the first round. Huni went straight after the 6'9" tall Maris rocking him with left hooks to head and body and sent him stumbling to the ropes. Huni then pounded on Maris sending him sliding along the ropes with a right to the head and the referee came in to stop the fight. Maris protested the stoppage but it was well-timed. Huni, 22, won the Australian title in his first pro fight. He is a former World Youth Champion and World Championships bronze medallist and has already qualified for the Tokyo Olympics. Maris lacked the experience to cope with the more mobile Huni.

Tijuana, Mexico: Super Welter: Carlos Ocampo (29-1) W TKO 2 Ivan Matute (30-4). Super Welter: Dunbiel Sanchez (17-0-2) W PTS 10 Ruben Orozco (8-4).

Ocampo vs. Matute

Ocampo disposes of Matute in two rounds. Ocampo had Matute under plenty of pressure in the first and he was obviously the harder puncher. In the second a series of left hook to the body forced Matute to drop to one knee. After the count Ocampo landed more body punches before flooring Matute with a right. Matute got up but was quickly trapped on the ropes and some more left hooks to the body saw him down on one knee with his face screwed up in agony and the referee stopped the fight. The 25-year-old from Ensenada now has 19 inside the distance victories. When he challenged Errol Spence for the IBF welter title in 2018 he was knocked out inside the first round and this is his seventh win as he tries to restore some pride. Needless

to say that Venezuelan Matute has a very heavily padded record.

Sanchez vs. Orozco

Sanchez outpoints Orozco to remain unbeaten. Sanchez used a strong body attack to take charge in this fight. He picked his punches well and stuck to his game plan. Orozco did well enough with his pressing attacks to outscore Sanchez on occasion but Sanchez took the unanimous decision. All three judges gave it to Sanchez 97-93 to make it a double for Ensenada. Four consecutive losses for Orozco.

Valencia, Spain: Welter: Jon Miguez (13-0) W KO 8 Ricardo Roser (7-1). Super Feather: Juan Felix Gomez (10-0) W RTD 7 Diego Valtierra (6-3). Light: Zeus de Armas (12-0) W TKO 5 Carlos Arroyo (5-16-1).

Miguez vs. Roser

Miguez wins the vacant Spanish title with kayo of Roser. After a slow first round Miguez did the attacking switching guards and he rocked Roser with a left hook in the third. Roser countered well and it was very close at the end of the fourth with Miguez in front on one card, Roser in front on another and the third reading a tie. Miguez upped the pressure over the middle rounds with Roser forced to stand and punch with Miguez and suffering a cut by his left eye. In the eighth Roser was slowing and Miguez connected with a series of punches that sent Roser down on his knees and he was counted out. Sixth inside the distance win for the 24-year-old from Cantabria.

Disappointment for local boxer Roser who was short on power.

Gomez vs. Valtierra

Southpaw Gomez gets a win for Valencia as he beats Valtierra to win the vacant Spanish title. Gomez had the longer reach and he used that to the full. He also showed some good defensive work and Valtierra just could not get into the fight. Gomez was scoring at distance and countering strongly and Valtierra was slowly being broken down. In the sixth Valtierra

was down twice and a cut had opened over his left eye. He was given one more round to turn things around but just took more punishment and retired at the end of the seventh. Nice boxing from 24-year-old "El Mago" Gomez. Valtierra had never gone past six rounds before and was well beaten.

de Armas vs. Arroyo

Canary Islander de Armas has no trouble stopping Arroyo. He put Arroyo down in the fourth and twice more in the fifth and the fight was over. The 35-year-old will be looking for a shot at the national title. Spanish-based Nicaraguan Arroyo has just one win in his last nine fights.

London, England: Welter: Conor Benn (18-0) W TKO 1 Samuel Vargas (31-7-2). Bantam: Ukashir Farooq (15-1) W PTS 10 Alexander Espinoza (20-3-2).

Benn vs. Vargas

Benn blitzes Vargas in one. After both had stabbed out jabs Benn scored with a left hook/overhand right and was letting his punches go. Vargas came forward taking the fight to Benn who connected with two rights the second one stopped Vargas in his tracks. Benn then poured on the punches driving Vargas to the ropes under a barrage of shots to head and body. He had Vargas pinned to the ropes and was connecting with hooks and uppercuts with Vargas being rocked and with his head being snapped back and flung side to side by punches when the referee stepped in. Vargas protested but it was a good call. All over in 80 seconds. Second impressive showing in a row by Benn after beating Sebastian Formella in November. He was making the fourth defence of the WBA Continental title. Vargas has lost the big fights with Errol Spence, Danny Garcia and Vergil Ortiz beating him inside the distance but none of them did it this quickly and he took Amir Khan the distance and Benn is calling out Khan.

Farooq vs. Espinoza

Farooq comes through a true test as he takes decision over tough and experienced Espinoza. Speed and skill are two qualities Farooq has in spades but here he chose to show that he could also fight in the trenches. He took on Espinoza inside for much of the fight and these two swapped punches all the way. That bit of extra speed served Farooq well but his chin was tested by Espinoza and he was cut over his right eye when heads bumped together, Espinoza came on strong over the late rounds but Farooq had outfought the Nicaraguan and picked up a deserved decision and the WBC International Silver belt. Scores 97-93. 97-94 and 97-95 all for Farooq. The Pakistani-born Scot's only loss was a controversial split decision against Lee McGregor in November 2019. Espinoza had won 5 of his last 6 fights.

11 April

Livorno, Italy: Light: Vairo Lenti (8-4-1) W PTS 10 Gianluca Picardi (9-1).

Lenti is Italian champion after winning on a close unanimous decision over fellow-southpaw Picardi. It was Picardi who set the early pace managing to fight inside over the first three rounds. Lenti started to use his longer reach in the fourth but Picardi again scored well inside in the fifth. The sixth was close and then Picardi's output dropped with Lenti staging a strong finish to just nick the decision. Three scores of 96-94 for home town fighter Lenti with Picardi a very angry man about the decision. Lenti makes his record look a little better with his fourth win in his last six fight. Picardi will want a second shot.

Fight of the week (Significance): Joe Smith's win over Maxim Vlasov opens the possibility of unification fights at light heavyweight.

Fight of the week (Entertainment): The Australian title fight between Leti Leti and Wallace gets the vote with honourable mention to Smith vs. Vlasov

Fighter of the week: Jaron Ennis for his outstanding performance in knocking out Sergey Lipinets

Punch of the week: It has to be the booming right from Efe Ajagba which knocked Brian Howard out cold.

Upset of the week: Belgian-based DRC fighter Jack Mulowayi (9-2-1) was not supposed to stop (20-0-1) Aпти Davtaev

Prospect watch: None I have not already spotted

Observations

Jared Anderson has my permission to apply for a new nickname "Real Big Baby" just does not do it for me when attached to a fearsome puncher such as Anderson. A stamped addressed letter will get you a list of suitable nicknames not yet sold (I mean allocated).

PS Pablo Cruz has already taken "The Lethal Mosquito"

Two controversial/strange breaks in the action:

- 1) It was so strange to see Jason Bergman knock Trey Lippe down (as I saw it) and then instead of going after Lippe choosing to stand and argue with the referee for 20 seconds over whether it was a knockdown or not.
- 2) In the Smith vs. Vlasov fight both fighters had landed punches to the back of the head regularly and the suspicion was that Vlasov was milking the situation when he went down in the eleventh. What made it look worse was when Vlasov stood casually leaning on the top rope talking to his corner men like some housewife over the back fence. It incensed some of Smith's people who came down to ringside screaming at the referee in rage for letting Vlasov have more recovery time than looked necessary and I agreed with them.