

The Past Week in Action 5 July 2021

Highlights:

-Chris Colbert retains the interim WBA super featherweight title with wide unanimous decision over Tugstsogt Nyambayar

-Former WBO super featherweight champion stops Valentine Hosokawa as he continues his campaigns at lightweight

-Middleweight Etinosa Oliha and light heavyweight Adriano Sperandio retain their Italian titles with wins.

-Former WBC Female WBC lightweight champion Delfine Persoon moves down to super featherweight looking for another title shot and Argentinian light flyweight Evelyn Nazerena Bermudez stops Tamara Demarco in IBF Female title defence

World Title/Major Shows

2 July

Calvi, France: Super Middle: Hassan N'Dam N'Jikam (38-5) W PTS 8 Gabor Gorbics (26-20-1). Middle: Bruno Surace (19-0-2) W PTS 6 Nodar Robakidze (16-37-6).

N'Jikam vs. Gorbics

In his first fight for nineteen months N'Jikam outpoints a willing but limited Gorbics. The former holder of the secondary WBA middleweight title N'Jikam took a couple of rounds to get into his stride but then looked sharp as he worked well with his jab and weakened Gorbics with some meaty body punches. Unusually this super middleweight fight was scored just by the referee who saw N'Jikam the winner 80-73. N'Jikam, 37, suffered consecutive losses to Callum Smith and Fedor Chudinov in 2019 so has a rebuilding job on his hands and there is talk of a fight with unbeaten Christian Mbilli. Hungarian Gorbics is 0-1-8 in his last 9 fights.

Surace vs. Robakidze

French champion Surace was given six rounds of useful work by a tougher than expected Georgian Robakidze. Surace moved to 16 wins in a row as the referee scored the fight 58-56 for him. Robakidze is now 0-1-32 in contests outside of Georgia

Asti, Italy: Middle: Etinosa Oliha (15-0) W PTS 10 Francesco Lezzi (14-18-2). Light Heavy: Adriano Sperandio (14-1) W PTS 10 Stefano Abatangelo (23-8-1).

Oliha vs. Lezzi

Hometown fighter Oliha retains the Italian middleweight title with comfortable victory over Lezzi. Oliha was forcing the fight from the first bell and apart from a couple of good rights from Lezzi in the third that stopped the champion in his tracks Oliha controlled the fight. He had Lezzi on the back foot and rocked him in the seventh and had him on the verge of going down with a right in the eighth. Despite that Lezzi made it the bell but was a clear loser on scores of 100-90, 99-91 and 98-92. Second defence of the title by unbeaten Oliha. Lezzi is now 0-4 in Italian title fights but blamed his poor showing here on an arm injury.

Sperandio vs. Abatangelo

In another Italian championship bout Sperandio made a successful defence of the light heavyweight belt with a very close unanimous decision over former champion Abatangelo. The challenger could consider himself unlucky. He put Sperandio under pressure from the start. Sperandio had a longer reach and better skills but Abatangelo forced the champion to spend most of the fight inside. Sperandio created some space over the middle rounds and impressed with his greater accuracy when countering the oncoming Abatangelo. Sperandio tired late and with a strong finish Abatangelo looked to have done enough to merit at least a draw but came up short on the cards with the judges scoring it for Sperandio 97-

93, 96-94 and 96-95. Sperandio was making the first defence of the title. Abatangelo, 39, is 2-4 in Italian title fights.

Sheffield, England: Cruiser: Jack Massey (19-1) W KO 4 Engin Karakaplan (14-9-3). Heavy: Ian Martell (11-0) W KO 1 Erik Nazaryan (28-24-4).

Massey vs. Karakaplan

Massey wins the vacant IBF European title with victory over Karakaplan. A right hook to the body ended the fight in the fourth round with Karakaplan unable to beat the count. Second win for Massey since losing a close decision against Richard Riakporhe for the vacant British title in December 2019.

Turkish-born Frenchman falls to 0-3-2 in his last 5 outings.

Martell vs. Nazaryan

Martell gets his fifth win by KO/TKO as he puts Nazaryan down with a right to the body to end this one after 2:45 of the opening round. Nazaryan usually goes the distance as he has only been stopped five times in his 24 losses.

Louisville, KY, USA: Super Light: Carlos Dixon (12-1) W KO 1 Moises Flores (25-4-1).

Dixon blows away a sliding Flores. It took Dixon just one good right followed by a left hook to the body to put Flores down and out after just 47 seconds to register his ninth win by KO/TKO. Dixon was conceding 7lbs to Flores. Once the holder of the IBO and interim WBA super bantamweight titles Flores weighed 140lbs for this fight which tells you all you need to know about how hard Flores trained.

3 July

Eernengem, Belgium: Super Feather: Delfine Persoon (45-3) W PTS 10 Elena Gradinar (10-2). Super Welter: Nabil Messouadi (5-0) W KO 6 Milos Janjanin (14-25).

**Super Welter: Stephen Danyo (19-4-3) W PTS 10
Christian Arvelo Segura (12-6).**

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Persoon vs. Gradinar

After losing her WBC lightweight title in unification fights against Katie Taylor Belgian Persoon moved down to super featherweight and outpointed Russian Gradinar. The Flemish boxer used her long reach and superior skills with Gradinar spending most of the time going backwards at speed. Scores of 100-89 twice and 99-89. Now 36 Persoon had hoped to qualify for the Olympics but the pandemic ruined those hopes. Her aim now is a shot at the WBC and IBO super featherweight titles held by Terri Harper and then to get a slot in the WBSS tournament. Gradinar had only the most basic technique and was never really in with a chance.

Messouadi vs. Janjanin

British-based Belgian Messouadi knocks out Janjanin late in the sixth to win the vacant Belgian title. All of the wins scored by the 22-year-old Messaoudi have come by KO/TKO. Bosnian Janjanin came in as a late substitute.

Danyo vs. Segura

Dutchman Danyo collects the vacant IBO Continental title with unanimous decision against Italian-based Dominican Segura. The strong but limited Segura was giving away too much in height and reach and never really troubled Danyo Scores 99-89 twice and 97-91. The four losses suffered by 32-year-old Danyo have been against quality opposition including Custio Clayton and Felix Cash. In his last fight in February Segura was stopped in ten rounds by unbeaten Damiano Falcinelli for the Italian title.

**Oulu, Finland: Light Heavy: Aku Kanninen (8-0-1) W PTS 10
Timo Laine (28-16,1NC).**

Hometown fighter Kanninen just too young and too strong for veteran Laine and takes the unanimous verdict. Laine was a

slight favourite but from the first round Kanninen was quicker and more accurate and handed out steady punishment to Laine. If Laine had any hope that Kanninen might fade late as he was up at ten rounds for the first time but Kanninen stayed strong and although he never came close to a stoppage he dominated the action and lifted the vacant Finnish title. Scores 100-90, 100-91 and 98-92 for 21-year-old Kanninen. At 37 former champion Laine is now making his money filling the role of travelling loser as a test for overseas talent.

Saint Denis, France: Super Welter: Milan Prat (11-1) W TKO 3 Fouad El Massoudi (17-14-1)

Outstanding prospect Prat blows away seasoned pro Massoudi in two rounds to win the vacant French title. The Saint Denise fighter dazzled in the first as he landed with ferocious combinations. Massoudi chose to try to stand and punch with Prat but was shaken late in the round. In the second shots from Prat sent Massoudi down twice and when he was floored again in the third the towel came in from Massoudi's corner. Eighth inside the distance win for the 21-year-old Prat The loss on Prat's record was a disqualification for a punch to the back of his opponent head. This is only the second time Massoudi has been beaten inside the distance and he went twelve rounds with WBC No 2 Sergio Garcia in a challenge for the European super welterweight title in December 2019.

Tokyo, Japan: Light: Masayuki Ito (27-3-1) W TKO 8 Valentine Hosokawa (25-9-3).

Former WBO super featherweight champion Ito impresses as he is sharp from the start and outclasses Hosokawa. Now up at lightweight Ito was finding the target with straight rights from the start. The smaller Hosokawa just could not get past Ito's jab and as Ito began to put his punches together and connect with left hooks and body punches only Hosokawa's durability kept him in the fight. In the sixth Hosokawa was staggered by

a straight right and when a following left hook had him reeling the referee came in and saved Hosokawa. Ito made his initial move to lightweight after losing his WBO title to Jamal Herring in May 2019 but suffered an upset loss to unbeaten novice Hironori Mishiro. He had questions to answer so there was a lot of interest in how he would look in this fight under a new trainer and he looked good. At 40 and almost 5" smaller Hosokawa had nothing but his grit going for him but his winning of the Japanese super lightweight title in 2017 in his seventeenth year as a pro was a popular victory.

Mandaue City, Philippines: Feather: Pete Apolinar (15-1) W TKO 12 Jess Rhey Waminal (14-4-1). Super Mark Vicelles (14-0-1) W KO 10 Jerven Mama (12-1-1).

Apolinar vs. Waminal

Apolinar wins the vacant OPBF Silver title with stoppage of Waminal. Although Waminal was more mobile and busier it was Apolinar who was landing the harder punches and he was getting through with some hefty body shots. Waminal was given some recovery time after a low punch from Apolinar in the ninth but took a savage beating over the tenth and eleventh and a wicked left hook to the body in the twelfth sent him down writhing in agony and he was counted out at the 2:00 mark of the last round. Tenth consecutive victory for "Thunder" Apolinar and his ninth win by KO/TKO. First inside the distance loss for Waminal.

Vicelles vs. Mama

In another late ending Vicelles wins on a last round kayo. In an entertaining, competitive fight southpaw Vicelles was scoring well with his right jab and straight lefts with the smaller Mama coming forward pressing the action. Vicelles had built a lead but in the ninth after Mama was warned twice for low punches a clash of heads opened a bad cut over the left eye of Vicelles. In the tenth Mama was driving Vicelles around the ring but went low again and the referee deducted two points. Vicelles

then connected with a straight left to the head and Mama went down and was counted out with just one second remaining in the ten round fight. Vicelles extends his winning run to eleven fights. Mama had won his last seven.

Urdaneta, Philippines: Super Feather: Charly Suarez (7-0) W PTS 10 Eduardo Mancito (18-12-2).

Former top amateur Suarez floored and outpointed an over-matched Mancito. Suarez put Mancito down in the second and then outboxed him the rest of the way. Suarez might have been able to finish it early but a slippery canvas made it difficult for both fighters Scores 100-89, 99-90 and 98-92. Suarez won three gold medals at the Southeast Asian Games and represented the Philippines at the 2007, 2009 and 2011 World Championships and the 2016 Olympics but at 32 has left things late to make an impression as a professional. Mancito did his job giving Suarez ten rounds of ring time.

Carson. CA, USA: Super Feather: Chris Colbert (16-0) W PTS 12 Tugstsogt Nyambayar (12-2). Light: Michel Rivera (21-0) W TKO 8 Jon Fernandez (21-2).

Colbert vs. Nyambayar

In a clash for the interim WBA title Colbert puts on a boxing class he has too much skill and speed for Mongolian Tugstsogt. Colbert used quick hands and his longer reach to pierce Nyambayar's guard in the first. With Colbert's jab constantly in his face Nyambayar just could not get his punches off and when he did come forward Colbert was able to dance away. Late in the second Colbert switched to southpaw and dropped his left hand to his thigh confident he was too quick for Nyambayar to take advantage of the opening that created. Nyambayar scored early in the third as he trapped Colbert against the ropes. Colbert was never in trouble and he came back with his stabbing jabs and some hooks and uppercuts only for Nyambayar to fire a burst of punches to make it his round.

Colbert's persistent jabbing in the fourth was keeping Nyambayar on the back foot and forcing him into the counter puncher role but he was not quick enough to be effective. Colbert just could not find his range in the fifth and Nyambayar was able to do some useful work with his own jab but not enough to off-set quick burst of punches from Colbert. In the sixth Colbert's jab was working well and he put together some flashing combinations doubling his jab and landing overhand rights with Nyambayar too slow to counter. Colbert changed tactics in the seventh and not for the better. Instead of coming forward behind his jab he was walking in behind a high guard. Without Colbert's jab to worry about Nyambayar was stepping forward and connect with punches through and around Colbert's static guard. Colbert came to life late and just landed enough to edge the round but had made it harder than it needed to be. Colbert went back to jabbing, moving and throwing clusters of punches and landed a leaping left hook to take the eighth and he jabbed and danced his way through the ninth ending the round with an Ali shuffle. Nyambayar was just too slow to apply the necessary pressure and if Colbert was against the ropes it was because he chose to put himself there. Colbert produced some flashy stuff in the tenth as he raked Nyambayar with combinations and then danced around the ring with a frustrated Nyambayar a step behind all the way unable to land a punch until Colbert decided to just stand in front of Nyambayar with a high guard and let Nyambayar throw shots which he easily blocked. Colbert floated through the last two rounds with Nyambayar unable to get even one clear shot home until the last ten seconds of the twelfth when they finally traded a few punches. Scores 118-110 twice and 117-111 for Colbert who remains WBA interim champion. The 24-year-old from Brooklyn has great boxing skills and was too much for the slow and methodical Nyambayar and the fight was too one-sided to be entertaining. He would probably be able to handle Roger Gutierrez the holder of the secondary WBA title and

perhaps Jamal Herring but Gervonta Davis, Oscar Valdez and Shakur Stevenson would probably beat him right now. Nyambayar is strong but limited and has probably reached his ceiling.

Rivera vs. Fernandez

Rivera gets off the canvas to floor and stop Spaniard Fernandez. Rivera's better skills saw him build a lead over the early rounds but Fernandez always looked dangerous. In the sixth Fernandez connected with right that sent Rivera down. He beat the count and survived to the bell. Rivera steadied the ship in the seventh and then brought down the curtain in the eighth. A strong jab opened up Fernandez's defence and a powerful right put Fernandez on the floor. He struggled trying to get to his feet but was in a bad way and the referee stopped the fight. Now 14 wins by KO/TKO for Dominican Rivera and a useful result after victories over Fidel Maldonado and Ladarius Miller. Fernandez was outpointed by O'Shaquie Foster in Oklahoma in 2018.

Masvingo, Zimbabwe: Middle: Charles Manyuchi (25-4-1) W PTS 12 Muhamad Sebyala (19-14-1).

Zimbabwean Manyuchi retains the WBFederation belt with unanimous verdict over experienced Ugandan Sebyala. Scores 117-109 twice and 116-110 for former WBC International champion Manyuchi. Of Sebyala's 14 losses 12 have come on trips outside Uganda.

4 July

Rosario, Argentina: Light Fly: Evelyn Nazerena Bermudez (14-0-1) W TKO 9 Tamara Demarco (9-4).

In an all-Argentinian clash Bermudez retained the IBF Female title with stoppage of Demarco. Bermudez was 4" taller than the challenger flooring her in the second and then forcing the

stoppage in the ninth. Third defence for Bermudez. Demarco drops to 22-4 in her last 6 fights

Fight of the week (Significance): Chris Colbert's win over Nyambayar keeps alive the possibility of more top quality fights at super featherweight

Fight of the week (Entertainment): In a low key week Pete Apolinar vs. Jess Rhey Waminal provide twelve good action rounds. Well actually 11 rounds and 2:59 seconds.

Fighter of the week: Chris Colbert. Brilliant display of boxing skills

Punch of the week: The body punch from Apolinario that had Waminal rolling in agony was a great finisher

Upset of the week: None

Prospect watch: France's Milan Prat a super welterweight who is 11-1. He is of one of six children from Yugoslavian and Algerian immigrant parents. He has style and can punch

Observations

This was surely one of the quietest weekends since boxing restarted with Colbert vs. Nyambayar the only "big" show and that was for an interim title with a low key undercard.

The ease with which Delfine Persoon handle novice Elena Gradinar highlights one of the problems for female boxing. There are some star performers such as Clarissa Shields and Katie Taylor but too many poor fighters. What is missing is that all important middle strata of experienced fighters not quite star quality but who can both stretch the top liners and provide useful tests for the up and coming boxers. Female boxing needs some new names from the Tokyo Olympics to keep interest high and encourage more women to turn professional so that there is no dip when the current stars retire.