

The Past Week in Action 234 January 2022

Highlights:

- Filipino Mark Magsayo wins the WBC featherweight title with majority verdict over champion Gary Russell**
- Puerto Rican super lightweight Subriel Matias beats Petros Ananyan to reverse his only loss**
- Tugstsogt Nyambayar and Sakaria Lukas fight to a draw in a featherweight clash**
- Antonio Todd scores upset victory over Hugo Centeno at middleweight**

World Title/Major Shows

January 22

Atlantic City, NJ, USA: Feather: Mark Magsayo (24-0) W PTS 12 Gary Allen Russell (31-2). Super Light: Subriel Matias (18-1) W TKO 9 Petros Ananyan (16-3-2). Feather: Tugstsogt Nyambayar (12-2-1) DREW 10 Sakaria Lukas (25-1-1). Super Bantam: Abimael Ortiz (10-1-1) W PTS 8 Ryan Lee Allen (10-6-1). Middle: LeShawn Rodriguez (13-0) W TKO 1 Sixto Suazo (9-3-1). Feather: Katsuma Akitsugi (8-0) W PTS 8 Rasheen Brown (11-1). Super Welter: Evan Holyfield (9-0) W PTS 6 Chris Rollins (5-4-1).

Magsayo vs. Russell

The Philippines have a new hero as Magsayo takes a majority verdict over an injured Russell to win the WBC title.

Round 1

Magsayo made a confident start. He had the edge in reach and was quickly on target with his jab and straight rights. He was stepping in quickly and was effective with right hooks to the body. Southpaw Russell landed a couple of good lefts but was frustrated by Magsayo's speed in moving out of range.

Score: 10-9 Magsayo

Round 2

Magsayo continued to rip right hooks to the body. Russell tried to come forward but was having trouble getting past Magsayo's jab and the challenger was darting forward throwing a couple of punches and getting out before Russell could land a counter.

Score: 10-9 Magsayo

Magsayo 20-18

Round 3

A better round from Russell. He was getting through with his right jabs and bringing his left hook into action more. After again scoring with rights to the body early Magsayo was off target or coming up short with his punches and Russell was able to counter him better.

Score: 10-9 Russell

Magsayo 29-28

Round 4

Magsayo landed a right early which saw Russell dip at the knees. Magsayo tried to capitalise on that success but slick boxing from Russell saw him slipping away from Magsayo's shots and scoring repeatedly with straight lefts. He continued to land those lefts throughout the round but it was apparent that he was not using his right at all. Before the fight Russell had hinted that he had suffered an injury but was going ahead with the fight. At the end of the round the doctor climbed in the ring to examine Russell's right arm and it was obvious from the way Russell was wincing that he was injured but did not want out so the fight continued.

Score: 10-9 Russell

TIED 38-38

Official Scores: Judge Lynne Carter 38-38, Judge Henry Eugene Grant 38-38, Judge Mark Consentino 39-37 Magsayo.

Round 5

Brilliant boxing from Russell. He was slipping and sliding away from Magsayo's punches and scoring with straight lefts.

Magsayo seemed to have lost his rhythm and was not forcing the fight as hard as he had. Russell was just using his right as a measuring stick for his straight lefts and although under

pressure at the end of the round had done enough to earn the points.

Score: 10-9 Russell

Russell 48-47

Round 6

Magsayo upped the pressure in this round and was banging to the body again. He was also stepping to his left away from Russell's good left arm making it more difficult for Russell land counters and was able to drive Russell back with his jab.

Score: 10-9 Magsayo

TIED 57-57

Round 7

Another round for Magsayo. He was coming forward behind his jab and putting together some quick combinations. Russell was limited to his left hand alone so his only form of combination was to throw three or four straight lefts and if the first landed than Magsayo just had to take a step back and the others fell short and Russell was open then for a counter.

Score: 10-9 Magsayo

Magsayo 67-66

Round 8

Boxing skill gave Russell this one. He was ducking under and around Magsayo's punches and slotting home single straight lefts. Magsayo connected with a couple of hard rights but Russell was constantly finding gaps for sneaky lefts and using plenty of movement to leave Magsayo swishing air.

Score: 10-9 Russell

TIED 76-76

Official Scores: Judge Lynne Carter 77-75 Magsayo, Judge Henry Eugene Grant 77-75 Magsayo, Judge Mark Consentino 77-75 Magsayo.

Round 9

A close round Magsayo upped the pressure. Russell was side-stepping Magsayo's charges and catching him with left hooks but one punch at a time. Magsayo was able to put together some combinations and was working the body when he could pin Russell to the ropes and did enough to edge the round.

Score: 10-9 Magsayo

Magsayo 86-85

Round 10

A good round for Magsayo. He went back to his body punching and consistently ripped shots to Russell's ribs. The pressure and pace were telling on Russell and Magsayo was able to hunt him down and work him over on the ropes more than in the earlier rounds. Russell's overworked left arm must have been tiring.

Score: 10-9 Magsayo

Magsayo 96-94

Round 11

Relentless pressure from Magsayo now and only some slippery defensive work from Russell and very little else. Magsayo did what scoring there was with Russell now hardly using his left and when he did there was no snap and Magsayo was able to get close and score with hooks.

Score: 10-9 Magsayo

Magsayo 106-103

Round 12

Magsayo did the scoring over the first minute but after some artful defensive work Russell lifted his arms to celebrate his skill and from there he was landing his lefts as leads and counters and took the round.

Score: 10-9 Russell

Magsayo 115-113

Official Scores: Judge Lynne Carter 114-114 DRAW, Judge Henry Eugene Grant 115-113 Magsayo, Judge Mark Consentino 115-113 Magsayo.

Huge result for Magsayo as he joins fellow-Filipinos Nonito Donaire and Jerwin Ancajas as title holders. With Magsayo having been rated No 3 by the WBC this was not a mandatory defence so there will be pressure for Magsayo to defend against No 1 Rey Vargas but there is no doubt that Russell deserves a return as this fight hinged on the injury which forced him to fight for eight rounds with just one usable arm.

Matias vs. Ananyan

Payback time as Magsayo gets revenge for his only loss as he stops Ananyan after nine rounds of savagery. These two declared war from the first minute and then knocked lumps off each other for nine rounds. Over the first two sessions Ananyan

was rumbling forward poking out jabs and then walking through the punches from Matias getting inside and landing clubbing hooks and uppercuts. Matias was letting Ananyan come and connecting with his own hooks and uppercuts. Matias had the advantage in that he was also doing some basic defensive work whereas Ananyan was just soaking up the punches aiming to wear Matias down. It was brutal stuff with both sporting bumps and bruises after just those six minutes. Ananyan landed some heavy rights to the head at the start of the third but Matias blasted him with punch after punch before the end of the round and Ananyan was cut under one eye, had a bruise under the other and was dripping blood from his nose. Matias continued to score with the better shots in the fourth but Ananyan wasn't going anywhere and he stayed there pushing out punches and landed with a series of shots at the end of the fifth with Matias being warned for a low punch. The sixth saw Ananyan connecting with bludgeoning head punches and forcing Matias back but Matias was making Ananyan pay for every step with hooks and uppercuts. Ananyan was throwing more but Matias was landing more. The seventh was even more brutal as they traded hard punches for three minutes with Matias deducted a point for low punches. Matias was on top in the eighth rocking Ananyan with a right late in the round. In the ninth Matias hurt Ananyan with a body punch and then landed a fearsome left hook that spun Ananyan around and sent him down heavily. Ananyan made it to his feet and survived to the bell but in the interval the doctor signalled Ananyan had taken enough punishment and the fight was over. All of the eighteen wins scored by the 29-year-old Puerto Rican have come inside the distance and he is No 2 with the IBF so in a long line queuing up for a shot at Josh Taylor. First inside the distance loss for Ananyan who had beaten 20-2-1 Daniel Gonzalez in October.

Nyambayar vs. Lukas

Nyambayar and Lukas finish all even after a fast-paced entertaining fight. Nyambayar made a strong start. He was forcing Lukas onto the back foot with stiff jabs and knocked him off balance with great left hook. Lukas had his own jab working in the second and scored with some hefty straight rights. There was lots of confusion before the start of the third. His corner seemed to be considering pulling Lukas out of the fight because of swelling by his right eye and there was a conference between the referee the corner team and a doctor but Lukas was determined to continue. Nyambayar welcomed Lukas back with a low punch and rocked him with a right uppercut. Nyambayar's round but Lucas again found the target with rights in the fourth only for Nyambayar to take the fifth with some accurate jabbing. Lukas connected with crisp jabs and over hand rights in both the sixth and seventh and there was a big controversy in the eighth. Early in the round Lukas connected with a right to the head that shook Nyambayar then a left that knocked Nyambayar's legs from under him. Although it was cleared caused by a punch the referee ruled it a slip and Lukas scored heavily until Nyambayar fired back just before the bell. The knock down looked genuine so what should have been 10-8 was a 10-9 round for Lukas. I had Lukas two points in front but Nyambayar was stronger over the ninth and tenth. The judges scored it 96-94 Lukas, 96-94 Nyambayar and 95-95 Mongolian "King Tut" has lost to Gary Russell for the WBC title and Chris Colbert for the now defunct WBA interim title but was still No 7 with the WBC. Namibian Lukas, 37, was 23-0 before losing to Isaac Avelar in December 2020 and since then had restricted himself to two wins against low level opposition and was unrated but his performance in this one will have raised his profile.

Ortiz vs. Allen

Ortiz gets unanimous verdict over Allen. This one was very close with a knockdown in the second just being enough to get Ortiz the win. Scores 76-75 on the three cards.

Rodriguez vs. Suazo

Former top amateur Rodriguez continues to make progress under the radar. Rodriguez took just 96 seconds to batter an overmatched Suazo to defeat. The 28-year-old "Lightning" was twice US amateur champion and won a silver medal at the National Golden Gloves. A loss to Charles Conwell cost him a spot at the 2016 Olympics but he has won ten of his fights by KO/TKO. Second inside the loss for Bronx-born Suazo.

Akitsugi vs. Brown

Japanese-born Akitsugi wins this clash of unbeaten southpaws with unanimous decision over Brown. Scores 60-54, 59-55 and 58-56 for Akitsugi. Brown, a silver medal winner at the national Golden Gloves can rebound

Holyfield vs. Rollins

Holyfield gets another win as he outscores a competitive Rollins. Holyfield rocked Rollins a few times but Rollins fought back hard and had a good second round. From there Holyfield dominated the fight but Rollins fought back strongly before tiring and just making it to the final bell after taking heavy punishment in the sixth. Scores 60-54 twice and 59-55 for Holyfield. Evan is the only one of Evander's eleven children to have taken up boxing.

January 21

Buenos Aires, Argentina: Super Feather: Cristian Gonzalez (10-13-1) W PTS 10 Guillermo Crocco (18-1-1). Super Welter: Brian Arregui (4-0) W PTS 8 Nicolas Jara (3-1).Middle: Francisco Veron (7-0) W TKO 1 Carlos Ronner (3-2).

Gonzalez vs. Crocco

Local fighter Gonzalez gets unexpected victory over favoured Crocco. Gonzalez was 2-5-1 in his last eight fights going into this one but he hustled and harried the better boxer out of his stride to take a split decision on scores of 95-93 twice against

97-92 from one judge for Crocco who had a 16-bout winning streak going.

Arregui vs. Jara

Former leading amateur Arregui remains unbeaten as he takes decision over a competitive Jara. Arregui, 22, won a gold medal at the Youth Olympics and boxed for Argentina at the Pan American Games and in the Tokyo Olympics.

Veron vs. Ronner

Verona blitzed Ronner in the first round. He sent Ronner flying into the ropes and down with a right. Ronner bounced up but another right sent him to the floor and the referee signalled the fight was over. Fifth win by KO/TKO for the 23-year-old prospect a former national champion and like Arregui competed at the Pan American Games and the Tokyo Olympics.

La Calera, Argentina: Feather: Mayco Estadella (10-0-1) W TKO 5 Federico Pedraza (13-1-1). Welter: Williams Herrera (11-1,1ND) W TKO 1 Juan Balmaceda (10-4-2). Super Middle: David Romero (12-14-1) W PTS 8 Cesar Barrionuevo (35-5-2).

In a clash of southpaws Estadella won the South American title with stoppage of champion Pedraza. Estadella dropped Pedraza with a right early in the first and put him down again in the second. Pedraza did better in the third and fourth but a sustained attack from Estadella in the fifth led first to a standing count and then to the referee stopping the fight. The 23-year-old "Little Lion" makes it seven consecutive victories. Pedraza had won his last eleven fights.

Herrera vs. Balmaceda

Herrera extends his winning run to eight bouts as he scores two knockdowns in the first round. There was some query over whether the bell had gone before the second knockdown but after reviewing the video the referee confirmed the stoppage. Three inside the route defeats in a row for Balmaceda.

Romero vs. Barrionuevo

Disastrous return for Barrionuevo as in his first fight for almost two years he losses every round against Romero with all three cards reading 80-72. After a 3-2-2,1ND start to his career Barrionuevo went 31-1 before losing to Yordenis Ugas in a title eliminator. Romero looked a safe choice for Barrionuevo to shake any rust as he was 0-8-1 in his previous nine fights. Romero 0-8-1

January 22

Karlsruhe, Germany: Middle: Andrii Velikovskiy (20-2-2) W RTD 2 Rafael Bejaran (29-6-1). Welter: Karen Chukhadzhian (20-1) W TKO 8 Ryan Martin (14-3-1). Heavy: Oleksandr Zakhoshyi (16-0) W TKO 3 Pavel Sour (14-7). Super Middle: Petro Ivanov (15-0-2) W RTD 1 Nuhu Lawal (27-10). Middle: Simon Zachenhuber (14-0) W PTS 10 Maurice Morio (8-1).

Velikovskiy vs. Bejaran

German-based Ukrainian Velikovskiy gets win over experienced Bejaran. Velikovskiy was quicker and more accurate than Bejaran in the first and then floored Bejaran in the second. Bejaran's corner retired their man because of swelling around his right eye possible caused by a thumb in the eye at the knockdown. Velikovskiy collects the IBO Inter-Continental title. Dominican Bejaran, 39, lost only one of his first 28 fights but age plus tougher opposition has added a dose of reality.

Chukhadzhian vs. Martin

Chukhadzhian extends his winning run to 20 with stoppage of Swindon's Martin. The action was close in the early rounds with Chukhadzhian having the edge but Martin competing hard and keeping the rounds tight. Body punches from Chukhadzhian started to slow Martin in the fifth and he put Martin on the floor in the sixth. With Martin also showing wear and tear under his right eye Chukhadzhian had Martin under heavy fire late in the seventh. Velikovskiy ended it in the eighth flooring Martin with

a series of punches and although Martin beat the count the follow-up attack from Chukhadzhian saw the referee stop the fight. Chukhadzhian wins the vacant IBF Inter-Continental title. He lost his first pro fight to Velikovskiy but has now climbed to No 6 in the EBU ratings. Martin had been 6-0-1 going into this one.

Zakhozhyi vs. Sour

The 6'9", 250lbs Ukrainian Zakhozhyi too big and too strong for 6'5" 230lbs Czech Sour. Zakhozhyi staggered Sour in the first and then floored him late in the second. Sour beat the count but was down twice more in the third round and the fight was halted. Twelfth inside the distance win for Zakhozhyi but the quality of opposition has him down at No 16 in the EBU-EEU ratings for fighters from outside the European Union. Sixth loss by KO/TKO for Sour all in tough matches.

Ivanov vs. Lawal

Ivanov makes it a clean sweep for the Ukrainians on the card as a sliding Lawal retires after the first round. Fifth victory by KO/TKO in his last six fights for WBC International champion Ivanov. At one time Lawal was 23-0 but it is now just four wins in his last fourteen contests.

Zachenhuber vs. Morio

Zachenhuber wins the vacant IBF Youth belt with unanimous decision over Morio in an entertaining contest. Morio did enough to collect the points in the first round but then Zachenhuber boxed well scoring with strong jab and straight rights. Morio made the rounds close pressing forward trying to unsettle Zachenhuber but despite Morio's efforts Zachenhuber took most of the early rounds. Morio edged the sixth and ninth but by then Zachenhuber had built a big lead and was able to box his way to victory. Scores 98-92 twice and 97-94 for the 23-year-old Zachenhuber. German champion Morio, 21, showed promise.

Dearborn, MI, USA: Middle: Antonio Todd (13-5-1ND) W PTS 10 Hugo Centeno (28-4-1,1ND).Middle: Winfred Harris (21-1-1) W PTS 8 Esau Herrera (19-14-1).

Todd vs. Centeno

Todd pulls off a surprise as he takes majority decision over Centeno. Superior speed saw Centeno build an early lead as he swept the first three rounds. Todd came into the fight from the fourth pressurising Centeno and beginning to find the target with some heavy rights. The fight was close over the middle rounds but a strong finish from Todd clawed back Centeno's early lead and was enough to see him get the verdict. Scores 97-93 and 96-94 for Todd and 95-95. Easily the biggest success of his career so far for Todd who has been strictly a modest preliminary performer. Centeno's previous losses had been against Maciej Sulecki and Willie Monroe and he had been knocked out in two rounds by Jermall Charlo for the WBC interim title. He was rated No 10 by the WBC.

Harris vs. Herrera

Harris keeps busy with a points win over experienced Mexican Herrera. Scores 79-73 twice and 77-75 for Harris. After being inactive in 2019 and 2020 Harris returned to action in May had is 4-0-1 since then. Herrera drops to 1-8 in his last 9 fights.

Merlo, Argentina: Fly: Gabriela Alaniz (12-0) W TKO 4 Johana Zuniga (16-2).

Argentinian champion Alaniz stops Zuniga in four rounds. Alaniz dropped Zuniga in the third and was pounding her along the ropes in the fourth. There was nothing coming back from Zuniga so the referee came in to save her from more punishment. Alaniz, 25, had over 70 amateur fights and this is her fourth inside the distance victory as a pro. She collects the WBC Latino belt. Zuniga had been stopped in four rounds by Yesica Bopp in a challenge for the WBA Female light flyweight title in October.

Fight of the week (Significance): Mark Magsayo's win over Gary Russell adds new factor to the featherweight title stakes.

Fight of the week (Entertainment) Subriel Matias vs. Petros Ananyan was not a fight for the faint hearted as they battled toe-to-toe for nine rounds

Fighter of the week: Magsayo gives the Philippines another title holder but Gary Russell has to get an honourable mention after battling with that injury

Punch of the week: The left hook from Subriel Matias that floored Petros Ananyan was a real thunderbolt

Upset of the week: Antonio Todd 12-5-1 beating 28-3-1 Hugo Centeno was not in the script.

Prospect watch: Middleweight LeShawn Rodriguez 13-0 10 wins by KO/TKO is coming along nicely.

Observations

Rosette: To all involved in the Atlantic City show. Good top liners with Magsayo vs. Russell a majority verdict, Nyambayar vs. Lukas a split draw and Matias vs. Ananyan a battle royal

Red Card: No baddies this week but a mistake in not counting the knockdown scored by Lukas against Nyambayar which cost Lukas victory.

It is understandable that Gary Russell chose to go ahead with his title fight against Mark Magsayo despite his injury. Russell had had just one fight in each of years 2015, 2016 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 and was inactive in 2021. The 2020 fight was in February so he had gone almost two years without a fight. He had been a title holder for almost seven years making him the longest serving of the current title holders. That honour now passes to Thai Thammanoon Niyomtrong (Knockout CP Freshmart) who won the WBA minimumweight title in July 2016. CP Freshmart was upgraded to super champion in March 2020 but had been the sole holder of that title before being promoted so has a legitimate claim to have been WBA title holder for over five years.

Having one fighter holding all four versions of a title is a recipe for a log jam. Josh Taylor will look after his business with the WBO by defending against Jack Catterall but if gets through that then the WBC will be pushing for him to fight Jose Ramirez the WBA to fight Alberto Puella and the IBF Jeremias Ponce and with Jose Zepeda and Antonio Barboza also in the wings so despite an impressive win on Saturday Subriel Matias could have a very long wait for a title shot.

COVID is still having its effect with no spectators allowed at the Karlsruhe show.