

A Bitter Conclusion For a Confusing Bout

By RICK WEINBERG

Special to The New York Times

LAS VEGAS, Nev., May 8 — The sordid image of boxing grew a bit uglier when Julio César Chávez reclaimed his World Boxing Council super-lightweight championship in a controversial conclusion.

The feature fight of "Revenge: The Rematches" was stopped with three seconds remaining in the eighth round when Chávez was unintentionally head butted by Frankie Randall, causing a deep gash above Chávez's right eye.

Shortly thereafter, chaos, controversy and confusion erupted, nothing new in the world of boxing.

No Decisive Indication

Chávez leaned against the ropes while his gash was being tended to by Dr. Flip Homansky. He did not decisively indicate to Referee Mills Lane or Homansky whether he wanted to continue to fight. So the decision was left up to Homansky, who stopped the bout because "it was my impression that Chávez didn't want to continue."

Lane then instructed the judges to deduct a point from Randall for the head butt and then, in accordance to W.B.C. rules, a decision on the fight would be determined by the judges' scorecards. While Chávez had not appeared impressive enough to be ahead on anyone's scorecard, he was awarded the victory in a technical split decision, outraging many in the crowd of an estimated 14,000 at the MGM Grand.

Randall, who had handed Chávez his first career defeat in January at the same site to win the title, fled the ring, obviously disgusted. At the post-fight news conference, Don King, the promoter, dispensed yet another plea for open scoring and trumpeted another rematch between Chávez and Randall.

Randall was more subdued, talking about taking a vacation and driving a new red Corvette King had purchased for him rather than lashing out at the decision.

However, Randall made his point clear after the news conference ended.

"I won the fight," he said. "We're going to stand up for our rights and what's fair. We're going to protest."

Was it called too early? And did the wrong fighter (Chávez) win?

"I was ahead in the fight. There was no way I should've been behind on anyone's card. Everyone should know that. I dominated. The decision was unjustly done. I shouldn't have to feel this way, like a loser. I was robbed."

Even Chávez said: "I don't like winning this way. I don't want any controversy. I wanted to win without any doubt."

Only one of the three judges had Randall ahead, Tamotsu Tomihara of Hawaii. He scored it 76-75. Dalby Shirley of Las Vegas had Chávez by 76-75. Ray Solis of Mexico had Chávez by 77-74.

"How can that man have Chávez ahead by that margin," Randall said of Solis. "Was he watching the same fight?"

Solis stood by his decision, saying through an interpreter: "That's the way I saw the fight. Everybody has their own criteria in scoring."

Randall was ahead on The New York Times's card, 76-75.

The bizarre conclusion was heightened by the uncertainty of Chávez's desire to continue. Homansky said he asked the fighter about continuing.

"He shook his head to me twice," Homansky said. "That was enough. The cut was bad enough to stop, but if he had wanted to continue, I probably would have let him."

Randall said he thought Chávez could have continued.

"I've seen worse cuts than that," Randall said. "His corner should have worked on the cut. There's no question he should have continued."

90-1-1 Record

Randall started quickly and aggressively. Randall (49-3-1) hammered Chávez (90-1-1) with a left-right combination to the jaw early in the second round that buckled him, but Chávez gained his balance.

Randall nailed Chávez with a hard, straight right toward the end of the third round, cutting the bridge of his nose. Then in the fifth, Randall backed Chávez against the ropes and landed a left uppercut that snapped his head back. Continuously on the attack, Randall stunned Chávez twice in the eighth round with sharp blows to the face, but then came the head butt and the controversy.

The evening's most spectacular bout involved Terry Norris, who was masterful as he stunned Simon Brown to win back his W.B.C. super-welterweight bout in a unanimous 12-round.

