



**ANDY RUIZ JR. DROPS LUIS ORTIZ THREE TIMES ON HIS
WAY TO DECISION VICTORY IN FOX SPORTS PBC
PAY-PER-VIEW MAIN EVENT SUNDAY NIGHT FROM
CRYPTO.COM ARENA IN LOS ANGELES**

*Isaac Cruz & Edwin De Los Santos Score Victories Plus Abner
Mares & Miguel Flores Fight to Majority Draw in
PPV Undercard Bouts*

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LOS ANGELES – September 4, 2022 – Former unified heavyweight world champion Andy “The Destroyer” Ruiz Jr. scored three knockdowns on his way to a unanimous decision victory over top contender Luis “King Kong” Ortiz in their WBC Heavyweight Title Eliminator that headlined a FOX Sports PBC Pay-Per-View Sunday night from Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles.

“Everyone was doubting me, but I worked so hard for this fight,” said Ruiz. “Ortiz is a warrior who hits hard. I did a beautiful job boxing him around. I showed more class than I usually do just coming forward.”

The first fighter of Mexican descent to become heavyweight world champion, Ruiz (35-2, 22 KOs) got his hometown crowd on its feet early, as he delivered a clean right hand to score his first knockdown in round two. Ortiz (33-3, 28 KOs) would hit the canvas a second time in the round, but got to his feet again and delivered several strong left hands to keep himself in the fight and make it through the round.

"I told you I was going to be a warrior and that's what I did," said Ortiz. "This is Cuba vs. Mexico. This is what I live for. To everyone who said that I'm old, I gave you a war today. There are always surprises in boxing, and that's what you got if you didn't think I'd give it my all."

Ortiz got himself back in the fight over the subsequent rounds with impressive boxing as he relied on his jab and movement to keep Ruiz from inflicting further damage. In round seven however, Ruiz struck again, backing his opponent up with a straight right before moving close and dropping Ortiz with an overhand right.

"It was a difficult fight," said Ruiz. "I was waiting for him to load up and countering him when he did. It was a blessing we were able to be successful."

Despite Ruiz pushing forward, Ortiz again used his excellent boxing acumen to remain in the fight. Ortiz even owned a slight 78-76 edge in punches landed according to CompuBox, but it was Ruiz's 67 power punches to Ortiz's 56 that made the difference. After hurting Ortiz again in round 11 and winning on all three cards, Ruiz was able to hold off a late charge from Ortiz to edge the fight on the judges cards by scores of 114-111 twice, and 113-112.

After the fight, Ruiz stated his willingness to meet former WBC Heavyweight World Champion Deontay Wilder in a possible blockbuster showdown, if Wilder is successful in his ring return October 15 against Robert Helenius on FOX Sports PBC Pay-Per-View. Wilder, who was seated ringside, matched Ruiz's enthusiasm for the potential matchup.

"If Deontay Wins in October, me and him are with the same management and we can make this fight happen," said Ruiz Jr. "Let's do it. Let's get it on. I'm hungry and I want to be champion again and bring that belt back to Mexico."

"Deontay Wilder is back and I'm always looking for great exciting fights for the fans," said Wilder. "If Andy Ruiz Jr. is what's next, then I'm ready to get it on."

In the co-main event, top lightweight contender **Isaac "Pitbull" Cruz** (24-2-1, 17 KOs) delivered a highlight-reel knockout over veteran contender **Eduardo Ramirez** (27-3-3, 12 KOs) in the second round of their showdown.

Already a fan-favorite after giving three-division world champion Gervonta Davis all he could handle in defeat at this same arena last December, Mexico City's Cruz entered the ring to roaring approval as he looked for another statement victory.

"I was ready to win at all costs, for my family and what better way to win than here in front of all the great fans in Los Angeles," said Cruz."

Midway through round two, Davis showed the fight-changing power that he possesses and that has helped make him a fan favorite in Los Angeles and beyond. Cruz first connected flush with a big left hook around a Ramirez jab that sent Ramirez to the mat hard.

While Ramirez was able to get to his feet, Cruz pushed forward, sensing his moment to end the fight. Using a feint right hand, Ramirez caught Cruz cleanly with another left hook and followed up with a powerful right hand to score a second knockdown. This time referee Jack Reiss jumped in immediately and halt the bout 2:27 into the round.

"I lost and I have to accept that," said Ramirez. "I'll get better and move forward. I felt like I was fighting well and then everything turned all of a sudden. That's just boxing. Now I'm going to rest, recover and plan my next moves going forward. But I'll definitely be back, you can count on that."

In his post-fight interview with FOX Sports' Heidi Androl, Cruz declared his intention to rematch WBA Lightweight Champion Gervonta Davis, who was seated ringside.

"We want the rematch with Gervonta Davis," said Cruz. "That's what these fans want. I promised the knockout tonight and we got it done."

In his first fight in over four years, former three-division world champion **Abner Mares** (31-3-2, 15 KOs) fought **Miguel Flores** (25-4-1, 12 KOs) to an exciting majority draw after 10-rounds in their lightweight duel.

Mares had a hot start to his ring-return, landing a series of sharp right hands early in round two that brought his hometown Southern California crowd to its feet as their hometown hero landed 42 blows in the frame. A world champion at bantamweight, super bantamweight and featherweight throughout his career, Mares believed he had done enough to win the fight.

"Obviously it had been over four years, so I was a little off with my timing and a little sluggish," said Mares. "But I felt good and I thought I was landing the more powerful shots throughout."

Although Mares held a 151 to 124 edge in punches landed, the two combatants were even at 90 to 90 in punches landed throughout rounds three through 10. His improvement in the second half of the fight was enough for the victory in Flores' eyes.

"It was a good fight and obviously I thought that I pulled it off," said Flores. "I know we're in his hometown and he's a veteran so it is what it is. He was trying to pot shot me, but I was catching most of it. He got me with a couple good shots early on but I felt like I was in control after the fourth round."

Flores had his best rounds in the final two frames, sweeping the ninth and 10th on all three cards to clinch the draw. The raucous 10th round left the fans on their feet with both fighters raising their hand in victory before the scores of 95-95 twice and 96-94 for Mares were read.

"It was a great atmosphere," said Flores. "It's hard to not let the crowd get you carried away. I know they were cheering for me too by the end. This leaves me in a great position. We got a draw against a three-division world champion so it leaves a good taste in your mouth."

"After four years away I did enough to beat a young kid and an active fighter," said Mares. "My performance speaks for itself. The crowd was happy and it felt good to be home. I definitely felt like I won but it is what it is, the judges saw a draw."

In the pay-per-view opener, the Dominican Republic's **Edwin De Los Santos** (15-1, 14 KOs) scored an upset via third-round TKO as he dropped the previously unbeaten **Jose Valenzuela** (12-1, 8 KOs) three times before referee Ray Corona waived off the bout 1:08 into the round.

"Valenzuela is a fighter who I feel has been protected and I wanted to show everyone what I'm capable of," said De Los Santos. "The plan wasn't to come forward so much, but when I saw how he was fighting, I was ready to go toe-to-toe. The Mexican fighters love to fight like that, but he was open for me to attack."

"I didn't expect De Los Santos to be as aggressive as he was in the fight," said Valenzuela. "He gave it out as he good as he took. I just want to focus on getting back in the ring and redeeming myself."

A late replacement who officially stepped in to face Valenzuela this week, De Los Santos looked sharp from the outset, staggering Valenzuela in round one, although Valenzuela was able to survive the round. Early in round two Valenzuela was staggered again, but was able to shift the momentum temporarily, landing a powerful left hook that put De Los Santos down.

After rising to his feet, De Los Santos was able to regain momentum with a series of right hooks that put Valenzuela down hard. De Los Santos was penalized by the referee for throwing an extra shot while Valenzuela was down, which gave Valenzuela extra time to recover and make it through the round.

De Los Santos looked the fresher fighter heading into the round and was able to drop Valenzuela again early in the frame. Valenzuela again was able to get back on his feet but after a follow up flurry from De Los Santos, the referee jumped in and officially waived off the fight.

"I came in against a ranked fighter tonight and I was up for the task," said De Los Santos. "Now I want the same name that everyone wants. I want Gervonta Davis."

Prior to the PPV, prelims live on FOX and FOX Deportes featured rising unbeaten super welterweight **Joey Spencer** (16-0, 10 KOs) earn a career-best 10-round unanimous decision over **Kevin Salgado** (14-1-1, 9 KOs).

"He's a hard-hitting counter puncher, so we wanted to control the distance," said Spencer. "I feel really strong. I'm really proud of the work that we put into my conditioning and I think it showed in the fight. I'm improving as I get more experience, and that helps me stay more composed in these fights. I'm going to keep adding to my game as I get more comfortable. I'm definitely working towards improving as an offensive fighter."

In his first 10-round fight as a pro, the 22-year-old Spencer turned away what many considered the toughest opponent of his career, riding an 79 to 54 edge in punches landed to victory. Mexico's Salgado proved to be a stiff test for Spencer as he continued to push forward until the final bell. After 10 rounds, all three judges saw it in Spencer's favor by scores of 99-91 twice and 100-90.

"I have a couple ideas of who I want to fight next," said Spencer. "Tony Harrison, Tim Tszyu, Erickson Lubin and Sebastian Fundora are all guys I want to fight. I want to face the best. There's one champion in the division and we have to fight each other to get to him."

In action live on FS1 and FOX Deportes, unbeaten super bantamweight contender **Ra'eese Aleem** (20-0, 12 KOs) showed off his considerable boxing skill in earning a unanimous decision over **Mike Plania** (26-2, 13 KOs) in their 10-round duel.

"The fight was everything that I expected," said Aleem. He's a very tough fighter and a great competitor. I just wanted to fight a smart fight, because we know he's dangerous. Although I didn't feel his power, I know that he can hit. I just wanted to take my time and let everything fall into place."

Aleem scored a knockdown early in round two to jump out to the early lead and controlled the action throughout, displaying an impressive and varied attack highlighted by a variety of left hands. After closing the show with a dominant 10th and final round, Aleem earned the decision by score of 100-89 three times.

"It's time for 'scared boy' Stephen Fulton Jr. to come out of hiding and sign the contract," said Aleem. "Let's get in there so I can give him his first loss. It would be a closer fight than tonight, but I still expect to dominate and get the win."

The event was promoted by TGB Promotions.

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