

# Corrales, Castillo stage classic

LAS VEGAS (AP) - When it was finally over, the last blood shed and the improbable ending pondered, someone had the audacity to suggest that Diego Corrales and Jose Luis Castillo should do it again.

Corrales' trainer winced, just as he had when he saw his fighter go down twice in the 10th round Saturday night before launching an astounding rally to win the lightweight title fight.

"You would have to be sadistic to want to see this again," trainer Joe Goossen said. Indeed, one look at both warriors was evidence enough of the price they paid for giving boxing fans a fight for the ages.

Corrales was half-blinded and his face a puffy mess. Castillo had a big cut above his left eye and his face was reddened and swollen.

For nine rounds the two went after each other in the center of the ring at the Mandalay Bay Hotel-Casino, neither giving the other an inch, in a tremendous battle of wills between two proud champions who vowed going in that they were not going to back off.

The rounds were fought at a fierce pace, with tremendous ebb and flow. The fight had been billed as a potential fight of the year, and even before the shocking end it already lived up to expectations.

"A war of attrition," Corrales said.

Then came the 10th round, which will live in boxing lore much like the first round of the Thomas Hearn-Marvelous Marvin Hagler nearly 20 years to the day just down the street at Caesars Palace.

Corrales was ahead on two of the three ringside scorecards when he was caught with a tremendous left hook that put him on the canvas only seconds into the round. He got up at the count of eight and got some extra time after spitting out his

mouthpiece, but Castillo was on him when the round resumed and quickly knocked him down with another left hook.

This time, Corrales barely got up at the count of nine, but got extra time when he took his mouthpiece out again and dropped it on the canvas.

Still, he was in terrible trouble and it seemed like the fight would be over in just a matter of seconds. It was, but it was Corrales raising his hands in victory. He came out of his haze to catch Castillo with a left hook and then finish him off with a brutal flurry along the ropes that left the Mexican champion helpless and prompted referee Tony Weeks to stop the fight at 2:06 of the 10th round.

"Greatest fight I've ever seen," Goossen said.

Had Castillo stayed away and finished the round he would have won it 10-6 on the scorecards because Weeks penalized Corrales a point for spitting out his mouthpiece and Corrales would have needed a knockout in the final two rounds to win. But he wanted to finish off his adversary, and it cost him horribly.

"This was Mexicano mano-to-mano," said Corrales, who is actually from Sacramento and lives in Las Vegas. "I've waited for a long time to show my will and prove I'm a warrior."

That was proved on both sides in a fight that matched the two best lightweights in the world, holders of the WBC and WBO titles meeting in a fight that was supposed to match styles as well as skills.

Corrales, a broad-shouldered fighter in the mold of Hearn and freakishly tall for a lightweight at 5-foot-11, was supposed to stay away with his jab and try to use his big right hand against Castillo, the Mexican champion with a reputation as a relentless finisher and fine inside fighter.

Instead, the two fought almost the entire fight in the center of the ring, each with a head on the other's shoulder while hitting each other nearly nonstop with an assortment of hooks, right hands and uppercuts.

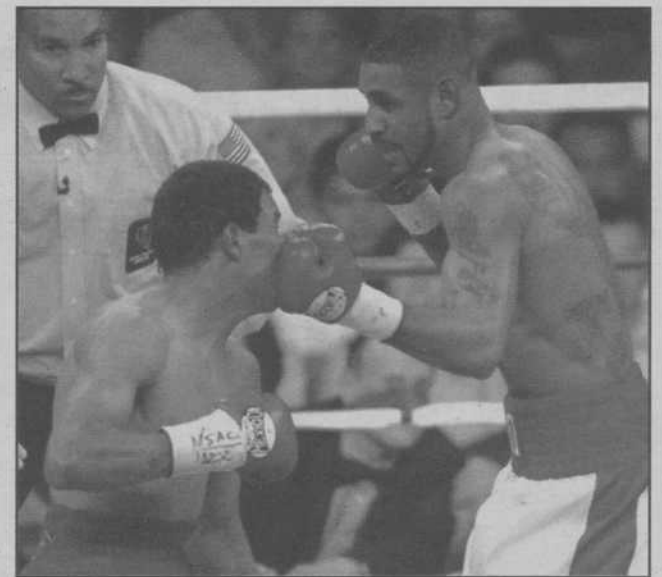
Before the final round, each refused to go down despite taking withering punishment. Blood flowed easily from a cut over Castillo's left eye from the fourth round on, while Corrales' left eye was nearly closed by the seventh round.

Not even a protest by Castillo's promoter, Bob

Arum, over the time Corrales got to recover after spitting out his mouthpiece in the final round could tarnish this masterpiece.

Castillo himself didn't protest when Weeks stepped in to save him from taking further punishment as his head rolled back and his arms were down on the ropes. Later, though, he suggested the referee favored Corrales.

"There is still a doubt over who is the best lightweight in the world because the result is controversial," Castillo said after the fight. "We can do it again tomorrow."



Sentinel-Voice photo by C.J. Casler

Las Vegas resident Diego Corrales, right, lands a left hook on the cheek of Jose Luis Castillo during a rough-and-tumble fight between the world's top 135-pound pugilists.

## Sports Pace

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director Marc Ratner thinks that would not work because some fighters would slack off when they were ahead. All athletes would like to pitch a shutout.

In the judging of the Corrales-Castillo fight, Judge Paul Smith had Castillo ahead 87-84, while Judge Daniel Van De Weile had Corrales in front 86-85, and so did Judge Lou Moret who had Corrales winning 87-84. The fighter that was behind would change his tactics in order to win.

Weeks, who declared Corrales the winner in 2:06 of the 10th round had a one point reduction for intentionally spitting out his mouthpiece in that round if the bout had continued.

"There will be rematch, if the people demand it," Arum said. "This is definitely the 'Fight of the Year.'"

Now Bob, what about the officials? Are they unbiased, biased or just plain human?

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