

Castillo evens score with brutal knockout

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Luis Castillo landed a vicious left hook in the fourth round Saturday night to stop Diego Corrales, avenging his defeat from their dramatic first fight with a punch that landed so flush he threw up his hands in victory even as Corrales fell.

Castillo left the ring without the lightweight titles Corrales brought in there with him because he failed to make weight the day before. But the belts seemed of little significance as Castillo won what had expected to be a battle of attrition in stunning fashion.

Corrales, who got up from the canvas twice in the 10th round in the first fight to stop Castillo, managed to get to one knee and halfway up as referee Joe Cortez counted to 10, but was wobbly and in no shape to continue.

"What happened," Corrales mouthed to his trainer after struggling to his feet as he was counted out at 47 seconds of the fourth round.

Corrales never saw the punch that ended the fight, but Castillo had already landed enough in the first three rounds to make it clear that he was not going to let the controversy over his weight affect his performance.

He cut Corrales in the second round, staggered him with a right hand in the third and finally dropped him for good in the fourth of a fight that was fought at much the same pace in the center of the ring as the first.

"I knew he wasn't getting up," Castillo said. "I told everyone I would knock him out before the seventh round."

Castillo, who waited five months to finally finish off Corrales, took less than 10 minutes to do so when he finally got his chance in the rematch.

"I have no excuses," Corrales said. "He hit me with a good shot."

Promoters immediately said they were invoking a clause in the contract for a third fight, and Corrales' promoter, Gary Shaw vowed that Castillo would have to come in at the 135-pound title limit the next time or there would be no fight.

Shaw had agreed to have the fight even after Castillo missed making weight the

day before by 3 1/2 pounds. "I'll never do again what I did in this fight," Shaw said. "If the contract calls for 135 pounds it will be at 135 pounds."

The second fight didn't last as long as the first, but it was nearly as entertaining as the two fighters once again fought in the center of the ring with seemingly little regard for defense.

Corrales came into the ring a 6-5 favorite, but had the more suspect chin of the two fighters, something that cost him the fight when he elected to trade punches with Castillo instead of using his height and reach to box him from the outside.

"I think his style is perfect for me," Castillo said. "He likes to fight inside and that's what I do best."

The fight was a rematch of one of the most thrilling bouts in years, a bruising battle that ended only after Corrales came off the canvas twice in the dramatic 10th round May 8 to stop Castillo with a flurry of punches along the ropes.

Both fighters vowed the second fight would be even better, and they went after each other from the opening bell like five months had never elapsed from the first fight.

Castillo nearly missed his chance for revenge the day before by weighing in at 138 1/2 pounds, well over the lightweight limit of 135 pounds. But the fight went on anyway, title or not, and some 15,000 fans came to cheer their favorite on.

Corrales had vowed to die in the ring if necessary to win, and he tried to fight the same way as he did in the first fight, toe-to-toe with the Mexican challenger. It was a mistake he paid for as he was on the receiving end of harder punches and finally the punch that finished it.

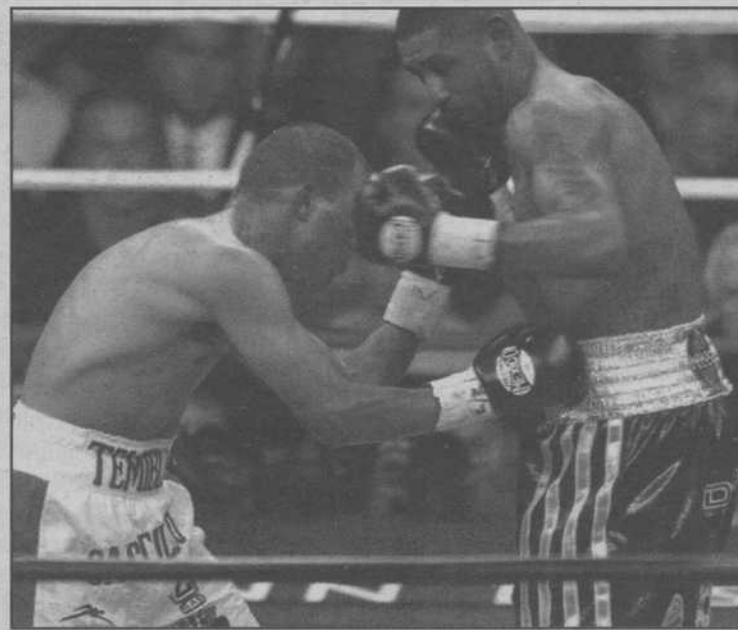
"What can I say," Corrales' trainer, Joe Goossen said. "He won it fair and square."

The fight was originally going to be for the WBC and WBO titles held by Corrales until Castillo weighed in 3 1/2 over the 135-pound lightweight limit Friday. By the time the two fighters stepped into the ring, though, they were full-fledged welterweights.

Because he missed the weight, Castillo had to weigh

in again Saturday afternoon and make 147 pounds — or pay Corrales \$75,000 for each pound over. He weighed in on the mark, while Corrales unofficially was weighed at 149 pounds two hours before the fight by Nevada boxing officials.

"It's a non-title special event as far as I'm concerned," Nevada boxing chief Marc Ratner said.



Diego Corrales, right, lands a left to the head of Jose Luis Castillo Saturday night during their 140-pound showdown. Castillo evened their head-to-head record at 1-1 with a brutal fourth-round stoppage. In May, Corrales scored a 10th-round knockout of Castillo in one of the best fights in the last 50 years.

Sentinel-Voice photo by C.J. Casler

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