

WORLD LIGHTHEAVYWEIGHT TITLE MATCH

By NAT FLEISCHER

PASTRANO AT HIS VERY BEST



Pastrano tipped the beam at 174½. Moments later, when it was his turn on the scale, Peralta also weighed in at 174½. Louisiana Boxing Commission Chairman Emile Bruneau is at left.

FLEISCHER CALLS HALTING PERALTA FIGHT IN NEW ORLEANS WAS JUSTIFIED BY CUT EYE

GREGORIO PERALTA, Argentinian challenger for Willie Pastrano's lightheavyweight title, sat on his stool in the New Orleans Municipal Auditorium with an inch and a half gash on his left eyelid, bewildered, down-hearted, almost in a state of shock.

"Why does this have to happen to me?" he asked me in Spanish.

He had been told seconds before that Referee Peter Giarusso, acting on the command of the ring physician, Dr. Anthony Italiano, had ordered his fight with Pastrano, stopped.

Stoppage of the fight was a wise and necessary action.

With that action, Peralta's ambition to become the first boxer from his country to win a world crown in the United States, ended in bitter sorrow. His dream had been shattered.

"I can't understand it," he kept saying in Spanish. "Why did they stop it? I am strong. The cut didn't bother me. I was just getting started. I was weakening him with body punches. I would have won."

Then he walked out of the ring, after shaking hands with his opponent and congratulating him on retention of his championship.

Pastrano, French Market idol of New Orleans, stood in the center of the ring to receive the acclaim of his admirers.

It was a short battle, terminating with the sound of the gong for the sixth round, but one to be remembered for its keen action. It was a thriller stopped at the end of the fifth round, but pursuant to Louisiana boxing regulations, was recorded as a sixth round knockout.

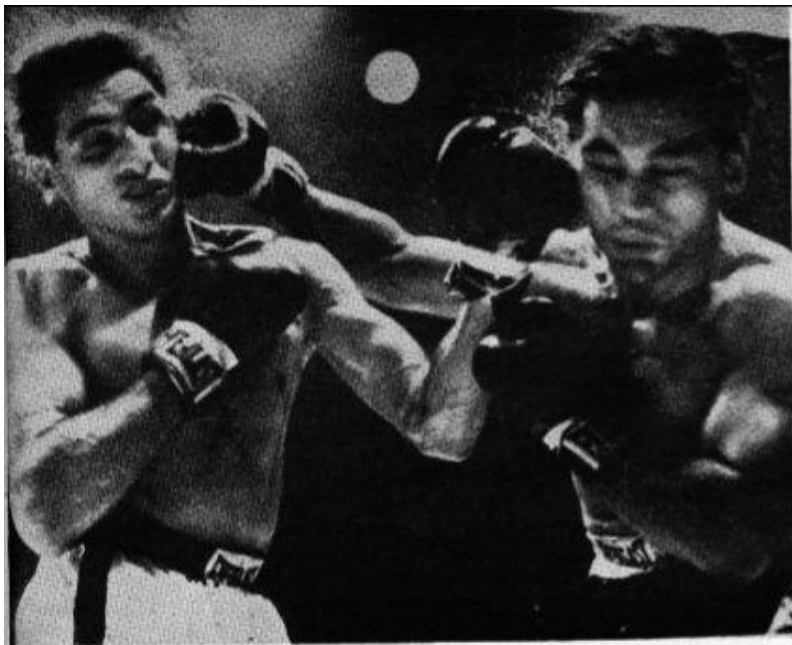
The referee stood gazing at the timekeeper during the entire minute's rest, awaiting the gong to get the sixth round under way. Then he held up the hand of Pastrano, winner and still champion.

Neither fighter was aware that Dr. Italiano had stopped the bout until Giarusso signalled the finish as the boxers came off their stools to resume the battle. Strong protests by Peralta's seconds, Chickie Ferrara, of New York, and Alfredo Porzia, of Argentina, kept the doctor from calling a halt in the previous round which, he revealed, he had been eager to do.

Thus a cut in an action-packed contest that kept 4176 spectators who had paid a gross of \$35,045 cheering lustily, enabled the champion to retain his throne in his first defense since winning the crown from Harold Johnson.



A wild right by the champion misses its mark in the third round of the fight. Willie, using his speed, got off to an early lead, but Peralta was coming on strong when the fight was stopped.



← This was one of the many exciting exchanges during the contest. Peralta was landing a stiff left, while Pastrano landed a solid right in the fifth round. Notice the bleeding from the cut over Goyo's left eye.



Handicapped by the flow of blood into his eye, Peralta is an easy mark for Willie's left jab in the fifth round. Although the cut was a bad one, Peralta protested the referee's action in stopping the fight and claimed that he could have continued. The stop order actually came from the doctor.

Although each fighter at the weigh-in had, under oath, sworn there was no agreement for a return bout, Chairman Bruneau stated after the fight that he would not stand in the way of such a bout if the pair could be rematched. An attempt to do so failed for the time being.

Harry Markson, managing director of Madison Square Garden, offered to match the men for May 22, but Pastrano doesn't want to engage in another title match so soon.

Bobo Olson, who challenged the winner, is the most likely next opponent of Pastrano, in an overweight match in San Francisco. If that bout fails to materialize, an Olson-Peralta contest, the winner to face Pastrano next July, will be under consideration.

The unlucky Argentinian, who also suffered a severe cut in his second bout with Wayne Thornton, required one inside stitch and seven outside following his title effort. Had he not met with that misfortune, his chances of bringing the title to his country looked extremely bright despite the fact that two officials had Pastrano leading four to one and three to two, and one calling it even. The referee scored it two-two and one even. I had Pastrano leading by 3 to 2.

As Peralta stated, he was just beginning to come through when the fight was halted. He handed Pastrano a sound beating about the body in the fifth round which all officials gave to the Argentinian and Willie started to weaken.

But in the previous rounds, Pastrano gave an exhibition such as he had seldom displayed. He was clever and hit sharply. The running tactics usually on view when Pastrano fights were not in evidence this time.

However, he found a willing opponent in his challenger. There was no sign of a let-up in the aggressiveness of Peralta. The five rounds were action-packed. It was an exciting duel with the fight getting keener each minute.

The fifth round, in particular, the best for Peralta, saw him send in ripping hooks intermingled with two-fisted body attacks. But the volley failed to keep Pastrano from countering with effective rights and shooting stinging jabs to Peralta's face.

As in his past battles, Peralta started slowly, studying his man. He kept circling and feinting while the champ hit him with sharp, effective jabs.

Willie continued his lead in the second round, in which he added double-barreled body blows. A right to the body just before the bell sounded buckled the challenger's knees.

That blow forced Peralta into heavy action in the third. He came out with a rush, pressed the issue and continued his aggressive, heavy hitting throughout the round. The pair engaged in slugging exchanges several times, with the Argentinian having the better of the fighting.

In the fourth round Peralta was cut. A long right was responsible although Peralta, in his dressing room interview, said that it was from a head collision.

The challenger, aroused by the damage, kept after his opponent and cornered him three times. Gregario pounded away at his rival's sides, but Pastrano escaped and piled up points with stinging jabs and right counters. Willie was at his best, far different from the Pastrano who fought Harold Johnson.

In his dressing room a jubilant Pastrano declared he was in better condition for this fight than in any of his long career.

"I trained many weeks and looked forward to this battle. When you have a championship match, the will to win is great. I had it for this fight. When the time comes for my next fight, I'll take anyone selected by my manager, Angelo Dundee."

Promoter Geogerman was disappointed by the small turnout. He had expected a gate of \$60,000 with an attendance of 8,000 but only about half that number of fans were in attendance. The revenue was increased by \$60,000 from television rights.

Pastrano received a \$50,000 guarantee, plus 35 percent of the net gate, while Peralta had a flat guarantee of \$15,000, the most either yet has received.

Referee Giarusso warned Peralta three times, twice for low blows, and once for hitting and holding.



(Left) A happy champion raises his hands in the air to the cheers of his home town followers. (Below) A saddened warrior, Goyo has his badly cut eye examined by his handlers after the fight.

