



Fort Worth Star-Telegram (TX)

2009-03-05

Section: Sports

Edition: Main

Page: D02

At 5-foot-4, **Fort Worth boxer** unloads short punches *TOBIAS XAVIER LOPEZ Star-Telegram Staff Writer*

STATE GOLDEN GLOVES 7 nighty, through Saturday **Fort Worth boxer** Jesse Casas plans to become a pharmacist, but he was already dishing out the medicine on Wednesday night.

Casas, 17, dominated his bout en route to a victory by decision against El Paso's Jorge Flores during the first night of the Texas State Golden Gloves Tournament at John Justin Arena at Will Rogers Memorial Center.

Casas advanced to Friday's semifinals in the Open Division, 119-pound classification in which he'll face Eric Manriquez from the Southeast Texas region.

At 5-foot-3, maybe 5-foot-4, Casas gave up a significant height and reach advantage, but worked inside and maintained distance with a sharp lead left hand.

"This is my hometown, so I can't lose," Casas said. "He was taller, so I just had to fight smarter."

Fighting out of West **Fort Worth's** Reyes Boxing club, Casas made his state tournament debut in his first year in the Open Division.

Casas said the size disadvantage doesn't intimidate him because he's used to it.

His corner said Casas' ability to take coaching and dedication makes him a successful fighter.

"We spar him against taller fighters all the time," trainer Vincent Reyes said. "He was relaxed. He fights smart and listens. At state it's not just about throwing punches, it's about fighting smart."

A long fight

Fort Worth's Anthony Salas claimed his first victory in the Open Division, but not without learning a lesson.

Salas, fighting for Tarrant County PAL, claimed his 132-pound bout against Isaiah Ayala (Twin Cities) on a decision. Salas bloodied and controlled Ayala in the first two rounds, but nearly ran out of gas in the final round.

The Junior divisions of Golden Gloves featured three, 1-minute rounds whereas Open Divisions fight the full 3 minutes for three rounds.

"These longer rounds take more stamina," Salas said. "You need more fitness. I almost threw up about halfway through it."

Salas advanced to Friday's semifinals against Dallas' Abraham Torres, who drew a bye through the first round.

Fort Worth perfection

Fort Worth enjoyed a perfect four victories in four attempts.

Aside from Casas and Salas, John Vera (Paulie Ayala's University of Hard Knocks) picked up a victory in the 152-pound class.

"I think I had control," Vera said. "I wasn't getting hit and I'm more of a counter-punch and defense fighter. I thought I controlled it and was confident I'd won."

Brandon Forrest finished the night for **Fort Worth** with a decision victory in the 178-pound class against El Paso's Robert Munoz.

Forrest, 24, hopes to turn pro and is also working in ju-jitsu to team with his taekwondo and boxing backgrounds for a possible mixed-martial arts career. He advanced to Friday's semifinals.

Special guest

Fight fans were treated to a special guest on Wednesday as **Fort Worth** boxing legend and two-time world champion Donald Curry sat ringside.

Tobias Xavier Lopez, 817-685-3868

(C) The Star-Telegram 2009



[About Star-Telegram.com](#) | [About the Real Cities Network](#)
[About the McClatchy Company](#) | [Terms of Use & Privacy Statement](#) | [Copyright](#)