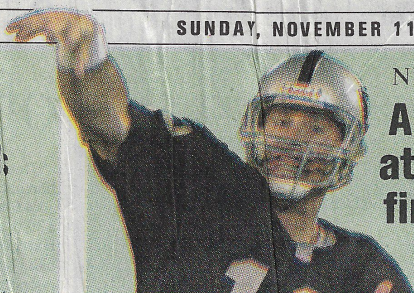


SPORTING GREEN

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MAYWEATHER-CHAVEZ TITLE FIGHT

Pretty Boy plan



JEFF CHIU / The Chronicle

Floyd Mayweather held back early before wading in with hard upper cuts that landed a ninth-round TKO of challenger Jesus Chavez.

Cautious Mayweather stops Chavez in 9th

By Nancy Gay
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

"Pretty Boy" Floyd Mayweather's final fight at 130 pounds ended in chaos last night, with the WBC super featherweight champion maintaining his title belt amid a chorus of boos with a ninth-round technical knockout of mandatory challenger Jesus Chavez.

Before a sellout crowd of more than 7,100 at the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, Mayweather's defensive strategy won out over the relentless punching of his opponent. Before the start of the 10th round, however, Chavez's corner signaled their spent boxer had seen enough, and Mayweather extended his record to 27-0 with 20

KO's.

Chavez, who had not lost a fight since 1995, fell to 35-2.

"My game plan was to simply let him punch himself out," said Mayweather, 24, who was comfortably ahead on all three judges' scorecards. "I knew coming in the kind of fight he would give me. I let him punch himself out. He was a tough guy."

The Mexican-American challenger, who had a large fan base chanting his name throughout the bout, came out as the aggressor, pinning Mayweather against the ropes and trying to outpunch the champion with combinations to the body.

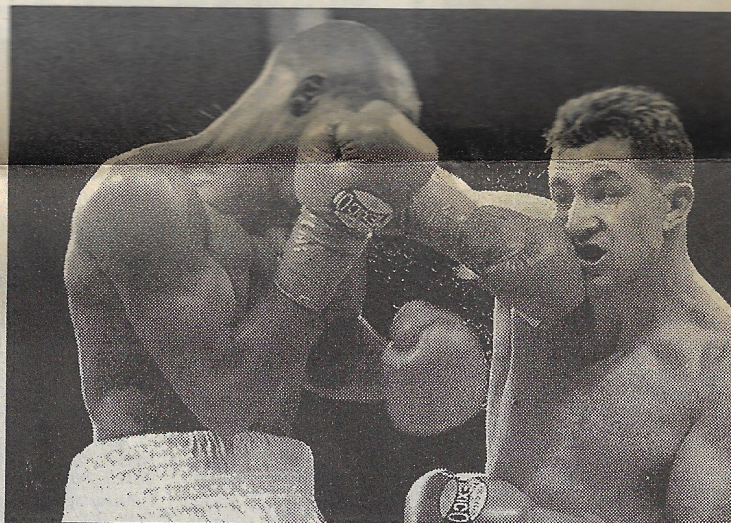
But Mayweather hung back, using the defensive strategy preached by his father, Floyd Sr., and he carefully picked his spots,

landing a shattering straight right just before the bell. Still, Chavez never strayed from his plan to box inside, as he hammered away at Mayweather's body with a huge number of punches that never seemed to do any damage.

Each time, Mayweather back peddled, waited, then landed significant blows. Chavez opened the seventh round with an overhand right that actually rocked Mayweather briefly. Again, the damage was minimal.

By the eighth, Mayweather began to come alive, hurting the tiring Chavez with a series of right uppercuts and straight right hands in the center of the ring. By then, Mayweather's brief barrages had taken their

► **FIGHT:** Page B13 Col. 5



JEFF CHIU / The Chronicle

Local fighter Arturo Morales (right) hit himself and then hit Mahan Washington enough to earn a unanimous decision in their undercard.

Cautious Mayweather stops Chavez in ninth

► FIGHT

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toll.

Chavez's trainer, Ronnie Shields, watched his fighter intently throughout the ninth and knew he had seen enough.

"Beginning in the seventh round, Jesus was getting hit badly by uppercuts," Shields said. "That's when I knew this was coming to an end. Floyd's a great fighter and a great champion. But I'm not allowing my fighter to go out on his back."

Chavez, 28, refused to apologize for the stoppage. "I'm not a loser — I gave the best fighter in the world the best fight he's ever had," he said. "My corner stopped the fight. Ronnie Shields stopped the fight because he knows there will be many more nights for me to come."

In the end, Chavez barely out-punched Mayweather, throwing more than twice as many blows (925 to 456) but landing only 185 to Mayweather's 197. The difference was power — Mayweather landed 51 percent of his power punches, while Chavez scored on only 25 percent of his power shots.

This was the eighth and final defense of the title Mayweather won Dec. 19, 1998, from Genaro Hernandez, and he took home \$1.6 million.

The former U.S. Olympic bronze medalist plans to move up five pounds and fight as a lightweight, with his eye toward a possible title challenge in March against WBC champ Jose Luis Castillo. Mayweather also wants to eventually move to 140 pounds

for a battle against WBC champ Kostya Tszyu.

"This is positively my last fight at 130 pounds. I'm after Castillo and Tszyu," said the always glib Mayweather, who, at one point, walked across the ring and engaged HBO commentator George Foreman briefly between the fourth and fifth rounds.

Chavez, 28, the No. 1-ranked WBC challenger since Mayweather won the title, collected \$400,000.

In the undercard, the battle for the IBF super bantamweight title turned into a bloody brawl and a battle for survival for defending champion Manny Pacquiao of the Philippines, who withstood numerous low blows and a devastating first-round head butt from WBO champion Agapito Sanchez.

With both fighters bleeding heavily, referee Marty Denkin stopped the bout one minute, 20 seconds into the sixth round, leaving the outcome in the hands of the judges, who ultimately scored it a very controversial draw.

In the earlier bouts, Dmitriy Salita of Brooklyn, N.Y., had little trouble raising his record to 4-0 with a third-round TKO of Miguel Mares. Salita, an orthodox Jew who was born in the Ukraine, was a Golden Gloves champion at 139 pounds and has won all four of his professional bouts by knockout.

Pittsburg's Arturo Morales won a unanimous decision over Mahan Washington in their four-round super lightweight match to raise his record to 5-0 (2 KO's). Jorge Kahwagi of Tijuana, Mexico, won his light heavyweight pro debut against Perry Williams of Oklahoma with a right-hand TKO 40 seconds into the first round.