

**WBF WELTERWEIGHT TITLE**  
Dondon Sultan v Eddie Delic

**CUBBY LEONG**

cubby@mediacorp.com.sg

HE HUFFED and puffed chasing a game opponent all over the ring, even getting hit a few times.

But Dondon Sultan proved he was made of sterner stuff, as he stuck to his game plan to beat Eddie "Psycho" Delic in 12 rounds to capture the World Boxing Foundation (WBF) welterweight belt, on a historic night at Hall 601 of Suntec Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre on Saturday.

After 17 years a world title fight returned to Singapore and it was a memorable show, capped off by Sultan and Delic's contest in front of about 1,500 fans.

Victory for Philippines' Sultan was huge as it could open the door to a fight in Las Vegas. Little wonder then that he was still holding on tight to his belt a couple of hours after the fight.

The 28-year-old said: "This is the happiest day of my life.

"Eddie was always running, his footwork made it difficult for me to move in.

"He was constantly elbowing me and pushing me as well, but that's boxing.

"He's quick and it was frustrating chasing the fight because it made it difficult for me to find that punch in. Eddie is a good fighter, but I did enough to win and now I'm looking forward to fighting in Las Vegas."

Indeed, Sultan, who won after a unanimous decision, was always in control and opened up Delic's right eye midway through the fight.

Aussie Delic, who also suffered a bloodied nose, was too disappointed to talk after the fight and it was left to trainer Paul Fyfield to explain why his charge lost.

"Eddie is a much better boxer than what he showed tonight," said Fyfield.

"He showed his usual courage but over the 12 rounds, he wasn't doing enough to win points to make it tough for the judges.

"He took Sultan's punches well but that doesn't translate into points, obviously.

"He did well to get out of danger zones but he just didn't counter enough to chalk up the points."

All three judges scored the fight comfortably Sultan's way – 117-113, 115-112, 115-112.

# SULTAN OF SWING

Big boxing night in Singapore sees Philippines star convincingly claim WBF crown



**HIT AND MISS:** Delic (right) tried his best, but it was Sultan who landed the telling punches.

TREVOR TAN

In the other big fight of the night, **Emmet Gazzard** lived up to his pre-match boast by taking out Thailand's Saensak Singmanasak after one minute and 36 seconds of the sixth round to claim the WBF Intercontinental title.

Gazzard, who admits he loves the spotlight, brandished his right arm in roundhouse fashion in the pre-fight introduction and it was to be a theme of his fight against Saensak.

The Australian bantamweight champion, who entered the fight on the back of

two first-round knockouts in four bouts, sent Saensak sprawling to the canvas seven times over the six rounds.

Six times a game Saensak got up to fight on, but on the seventh occasion, after a relentless barrage of left hooks, referee Dave Hedgecock saved the Thai from more punishment and declared Gazzard the winner by a technical knockout (TKO).

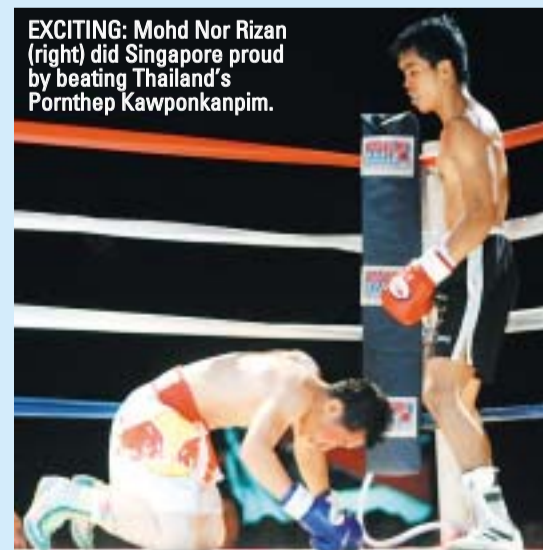
Gazzard, 23, said: "I'm surprised that he kept getting up. It was getting more and more difficult as the rounds wore on.

"Saensak's a good fighter and it took

me a while to wear him out. I'm feeling on top of the world right now."

On the undercard, Singapore's **Mohd Nor Rizan** was the aggressor right from the first bell as the 28-year-old beat Thailand's Pornthep Kawponkanpim by TKO in a super bantamweight clash.

In a four-round cruiserweight bout, **Dennadai Sithdara** took revenge for his countryman's defeat when he stopped local favourite David Alexis two minutes, 39 seconds into the third round of their four-round bout.



**EXCITING:** Mohd Nor Rizan (right) did Singapore proud by beating Thailand's Pornthep Kawponkanpim.

TREVOR TAN

## A fantastic show, now for much more

SINGAPORE'S young fighters were game. The two title fights were fast-paced and full of action, and the crowd turned up.

The Showdown in Singapore at Suntec City on Saturday night was a success and perhaps indicated that boxing could be revived, after the national sports association was de-registered here in 2001.

For Pure Details promoter John Leung, the 1,500 or so fans that turned up vindicated his decision to organise the fight in Singapore.

Leung said: "I thought it was brilliant considering that we put this together in a short space of time.

"Looking back, I could have done a lot of stuff differently, like using one official

hotel, for instance. The venue was great, but maybe with a little bit more time we could have got 2,000 fans in.

"Anyway, this was about saying Singapore can do it, I can do it.

"Style makes fights and I think the fans that came down will agree.

"It was a great atmosphere."

Work is now underway to try to get newly crowned World Boxing Foundation (WBF) Intercontinental champion Emmet Gazzard to take on Frenchman Frederic Patrac in a title bout here next year.

WBF chief Mick Croucher is eager to bring more fights to Singapore.

"I've organised fights in many countries and believe me, this is one of the

best venues anyone will ever see," the Aussie said. "Singapore is suited to really take up boxing in a big way."

And after watching Singapore's under-19 boxers Mohd Ridhwan, Mohd Faiz, Mohd Solihin and Victor Cheng display tenacity and spirit in their fights on the night, coach Barry Pestana is confident the sport can get back on track here.

Working alongside former Singapore champ and ex-Commonwealth Games bronze medallist Syed Kadir to kick life into boxing, Pestana said: "We need to keep the momentum up.

"We need to have our own stars. We have the talent and the powers-that-be must take note." — **CUBBY LEONG**