

Barrera Retains Title in LA Over Juarez

Written by David A. Avila
Saturday, 20 May 2006 19:00

LOS ANGELES – Marco Antonio Barrera, 32, looked the beaten fighter, but fought through the swollen eyes and bloody nose to escape with a split-decision draw over Rocky Juarez, according to the judges Saturday night.

Though most of the crowd left the arena believing the fight was a draw as announced, an error in calculation was discovered by Executive Officer Armando Garcia of the California Athletic Commission, meaning a victory for Barrera.

“It was bad addition,” said Garcia who discovered two scorecard errors.

Barrera (62-4, 42 KOs) was ruled the winner to an empty arena.

It was supposed to be the young gun Juarez up to his chin in trouble against the master boxer Barrera, who was defending his WBC junior lightweight world title in front of a mostly pro-Barrera crowd at the Staples Center.

Youth arrived in bunches as Juarez, 25, proved he was capable of fighting the three-division world champion Barrera.

“I definitely felt I did enough to win,” said Juarez (25-2, 18 KOs).

From the onset Barrera used his jab and footwork to evaluate what he had in front of him, but occasionally Juarez landed solid counter-right hands that let everyone know he was going to be in the fight.

“I knew he was young and strong,” said Barrera, whose face was swollen and nose bled from the third round on. “I knew it was going to be a tough fight.”

Though Barrera jumped out to a quick lead using savvy veteran moves to the body and head, Juarez began finding the range with his left hook. In the third, Barrera was nearly floored at the bell with a Texas left hook.

“I was too nice,” said Juarez, who had a cut on the side of his right eye and slight swelling to his face. “I thought I had him backing up for most of the fight.”

Barrera picked his moments and stole a couple of rounds with flurries that caught Juarez napping in the early going. Then the Texan took over with a body attack and left hooks that bounced off Barrera’s head.

From the eighth round to the tenth, Juarez pressed the attack and looked much fresher as he seemed to be boundless in energy landing left hook after left hook. With two rounds left, Barrera mounted a counterattack by standing and fighting against the young aggressive fighter. Both

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traded punches but it was the more experienced Barrera who was able to land and avoid more than his counterpart.

“Rocky is just a great fighter,” said Barrera.

Other bouts:

In the other title fight, Argentina’s Jorge Barrios (46-2-1, 33 KOs) needed less than three punches to prove his superiority over Hungary’s Janos Nagy for the WBO junior lightweight world title. A left hook to the liver by Barrios followed by another left hook to the liver a few seconds later, put a look of pain and astonishment on Nagy’s face. Down he went after signaling time out to the referee. He couldn’t continue.

“I’ve never been hit like that before. I wanted to go on. It took the wind completely out of me,” said Nagy (23-1, 18 KOs).

Barrios was a little surprised too.

“I hit him once and didn’t think it would do anything to him,” Barrios said. “It was my second shot that got him.”

Barrios said he wants the WBC junior lightweight titleholder next.

The contest for the WBC interim lightweight title between Japan’s Chikashi Inada (19-3, 14 KOs) and L.A.’s Jose Santa Cruz (23-1, 13 KOs) proved one-sided. Inada moved quickly around the ring intent on staying away from his opponent’s punches. When both exchanged it was Santa Cruz snapping Inada’s head back repeatedly.

In the third round, Inada moved less and began to engage Santa Cruz more on the inside. A clash of heads opened a small cut over Inada’s nose and a small bump on the left side of Santa Cruz. A long right by Santa Cruz punctuated the round.

The Japanese fighter decided to stand and fight and had a fairly close round by attacking the midsection in the fourth round. In the fifth, Santa Cruz began with a four-punch combination that had Inada’s face red with swelling and blood. But Inada bravely fought on. There was no quit in him.

Santa Cruz began the sixth round with nonstop punching. Inada’s head snapped back repeatedly but he never wavered. Another four-punch combination by Santa Cruz forced referee Jack Reiss to halt the fight at 2:08 in the sixth for a TKO victory for the L.A. fighter.

In his first fight for Golden Boy Promotions, Rey “Boom Boom” Baustista (20-0, 15 KOs) came out roaring against Nicaragua’s hardheaded Robert Bonilla (23-8, 14 KOs) in a junior featherweight contest scheduled for six. Blow after blow landed on Bonilla who smiled and waved him on. The young Filipino with the face of a 12-year-old obliged with even more punches in rapid fashion. Bonilla endured.

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After two rounds of bombing lefts and rights off Bonilla's head, the Filipino fighter's trainer offered him advice and it worked.

"Freddie Roach told me I could hurt him to the body," Bautista said.

After zinging combinations on Bonilla's head, a couple of right hand blows to the body put Bonilla to the canvas. He was counted out by referee Pat Russell at 2:36 of the third round.

"He was strong," Bautista said. "I learned I have to be patient."

Jozef Nagy (24-0, 14 KOs) gave a preview of his brother's style with street tough aggression that saw him bore into Julio Jean (7-9-1) for six rounds in a super middleweight bout. After giving Jean the first round, Nagy adjusted and refused to allow a tit for tat battle. Instead he fought when he wanted to fight and wore down his opponent with solid combinations for the next five rounds. The judges scored it 59-55 for Nagy.

Two Los Angeles area fighters met in a junior lightweight bout. Shadi Hamsho (7-0), a tall lanky speedster met East L.A.'s Armando Dorantes (5-1) for six rounds. Hamsho, who is trained by Freddie Roach, jumped out to a quick lead by using his jab and left hook. Once firing he was soon out of range. But after three rounds he began to slow down and Dorantes began finding him with his left hook. All in all, Hamsho was able to use his height and reach to effectiveness. The judges scored it for Hamsho 58-56 and 59-55 twice.

In a featherweight bout, Miguel Reza (2-1) outboxed Riverside's Hector Reynoso (1-3) in a four-round bout. Though knocked down in the third, Reynoso refused to quit and lasted the entire bout. The judges scored it for Reza 40-34.