

Chad Dawson Decisions Eric Harding on ShoBox

Written by Alex Stone
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Even though our favorite, loveable, credible Jose Luis Castillo came in five pounds overweight and his mega rubber match with Diego Corrales was cancelled, this weekend was not a total waste.

Last night on ShoBox, two exciting southpaws, Eric Harding and Chad Dawson, squared off for Harding's NABF Light Heavyweight title.

Harding was coming off two straight wins and in the midst of a comeback after losing back to back bouts to Antonio Tarver and Glen Johnson.

Dawson had established an undefeated record with a high knockout ratio, yet had still never been truly tested against a worthy opponent.

A win for Harding was a chance at another world title shot. A win for Dawson would prove that he indeed belongs in there with the big boys.

Seeing as Harding was a man who already owned wins over tough opponents such as Daniel Judah, David Telesco, George Khalid Jones, Montell Griffin and Antonio Tarver, as well as losing valiantly to the "real" Roy Jones Jr., losing to a fairly green prospect that had never fought anybody seemed unlikely.

The fight opened in Harding's favor. Dawson established a crisp jab in the beginning of the first round. Suddenly, a hard counter jab by Harding buckled Dawson's legs and sent him to the canvas. Dawson was up quickly from the flash knockdown and came on strong with some good combinations. Harding then answered back with some body combos of his own. Harding closed out a 10-8 round with some hard hooks and smashing straight lefts.

Dawson began the second round with some sweet combinations coming off of that thunderous jab of his. Dawson then began to punish Harding with some blistering uppercuts followed by a string of combos, backing Harding up. Dawson punctuated the round with an astonishing double right hook.

The third opened with some nice combinations by Harding, yet Dawson came right back with some gruesome combinations of his own. Dawson kept the pressure on tight as he continued to back up his opponent. Harding landed a flush right and was able to stay alive throughout the round with some smart counter shots.

Round four started with some clean jabs by Harding. Dawson however walked right through them and landed a pair of slick hooks to the body and head of Harding. Dawson continued the assault. Harding came back for a few seconds with a couple of straight lefts, only to be negated by some crushing hooks and uppercuts by Dawson.

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Dawson displayed his elusiveness in round five, slipping everything that Harding threw and countering with some blinding combinations. Dawson then began to establish that crisp, shotgun jab again, eventually throwing some straight lefts and superb combos behind it.

Here's a surprise, round six opened with some more blazing combinations by Dawson. The fighters then began to exchange jabs in the center of the ring. Harding began to come on a bit with some hard shots to the body. Dawson was unfazed by the attack and began landing some vicious combos and started hooking off the jab.

Round seven, more of the same, some fast combinations by Dawson. However, Harding found he was able to counter some of Dawson's shots this go-round. Harding began to look a bit more relaxed as he started to work his jab again, that is until a brutal left cross stunned Harding. Dawson then landed a nasty series of uppercuts and straight lefts as time ran out, saving Harding from certain destruction.

The eighth began with some nice body work by Harding, answered by some great body-head combos by Dawson. Dawson continued his relentless attack, landing six hard jabs in a row. Harding was now bleeding badly from the nose and mouth and appeared to be shot. Dawson continued on, landing basically at will.

Dawson continued on with his nonstop mugging of Harding with some gruesome combinations in the ninth. Dawson kept punishing Harding with some concrete hooks and uppercuts. A huge uppercut rocked Harding toward the end of the round as he held on for dear life.

Harding went into a turtle's shell of hiding in the tenth as Dawson started things off with a five punch combo. Harding continued to cover up as Dawson blasted away with devastating uppercuts. Some more combos by Dawson finally brought out a rise in Harding as the two shared an even exchange to end the round.

Dawson opened the eleventh with some piercing jabs followed by a nasty uppercut which badly hurt Harding. Dawson continued to pour it on with some more awesome combinations. Harding soon became wild, throwing wide punches and missing for the most part, while Dawson stayed calm and cool, not looking green or inexperienced at all.

Dawson laid back a bit in the beginning of the twelfth and final round, moving around and using his jab. Harding tried for a knockout, but continued to get countered by Dawson's superior hand speed. Dawson then landed 5 more jabs in a row as he continued to dominate throughout the rest of the round.

The judges scored the fight 117-110 (twice) and 116-111 all for Dawson.

TheSweetScience scored the bout 118-110 for Dawson.

Harding falls to 23-4-1 (7 KO's) while Dawson improves his perfect record to 23-0 (15 KO's)

Tonight was a fight which resembled a passing of the torch in the light heavyweight division. It

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was the end of one serious contender, and the birth of another.

With his dominating performance tonight, I don't really see anybody out there who Dawson cannot compete with. To be quite honest, I wouldn't even be that surprised if his relentless southpaw style was one in which could dominate the king of the division, Antonio Tarver.

Big things are certainly on the horizon for Chad Dawson. I cannot wait to see him in action again, hopefully in another big fight. A nice possibility for Dawson may be the winner of the upcoming Roy Jones fight.