

Pacquiao KOs Solis in Eight

Written by Mike Lynch

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Manny Pacquiao defended his WBC International Super-Featherweight championship with an eighth-round KO of the formerly undefeated Jorge Solis on Saturday night. The bout, before a largely pro Mexican crowd in San Antonio's Alamodome, got off to a sloppy start. But Pac-Man turned a sixth-round head-butt induced cut over his left eye into the fuel for his furious attack and eventually put Solis down twice in the decisive eighth-round.

In the early rounds, Pac-Man had difficulty feeling out Solis (31-1-2, 23 KOs), whose height advantage and awkward style appeared to contribute to Pacquiao's lack of rhythm. However, Solis initiated little action. He didn't land his first significant shots until the fourth round and seemed content to merely weather Pacquiao's storm in lieu of generating his own thunder.

The lefty Pacquiao (47-3-2, 34 KOs) seemed plenty frustrated, though, as he was initiating the action, but not finding much success. Solis managed to finally do some damage in the fifth round and even had Pacquiao backed up against the ropes halfway through the round. Following that sequence, Pacquiao was again determined to get busy, but without much luck.

The turning point in the fight came in the sixth-round when Solis opened a sizable gash over Pac-Man's left eye on a head-butt. After the ringside doc cleared Pacquiao to continue fighting, he consistently fought with his trademark sense of urgency that we saw only sporadically in the opening five rounds. He relentlessly advanced towards Solis armed with strong punches from a variety of angles, particularly strong left-hooks and sneaky inside uppercuts. Solis, who for so long had managed to keep Pacquiao off balance and out of rhythm, all of sudden found himself in the middle of a brawl with the wrong man.

Pacquiao continued the assault in the seventh round, before finishing the job with consecutive knockdowns in the eighth round, ending the affair with a left hook mid-way through the round. At the end, the CompuBox stats told the story: Pac-Man landed 109 power punches to just 43 for Solis--none of which did as much damage as the head-butt.

It was far from Pacquiao's strongest performance, but his reaction to the cut was yet another example of his heart. In the moment of truth, his response was all fight and no flight. He had a lot on his plate heading into this match (including a blooming political career in his native Philippines), but showed he can still get it done in the ring. He remains sloppy and unsound at times, but Solis was not the opponent to expose such flaws. The bottom line is that it will take a special fighter to stand up to the vortex of authoritative activity that Pacquiao can be.

UNDERCARD:

The under card was highlighted by an excellent WBC Super-Flyweight Championship bout with undefeated southpaw Cristian Mijares making his first title defense by notching a unanimous decision over bloodied brawler Jorge Arce. Mijares is lacking in power, but on the other hand, Arce is certainly not lacking for chin. Mijares fought a smart fight and never let Arce get

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comfortable.

Earlier in the card, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. also remained undefeated by knocking out an out-classed and overwhelmed Anthony Shuler with a powerful left hook in the 2nd round.

And in the opener, Edgar Sosa claimed the vacant WBC Light-Flyweight championship with a major decision over Brian Vitoria in a spirited bout.