

It's Unanimous: Manny Pacquiao Wins

Written by David A. Avila
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LAS VEGAS-In the long-expected rematch Manny Pacquiao could not humble Mexico's Marco Antonio Barrera but he proved once again his power too much in winning by unanimous decision on Saturday.

"It was different from the first fight," said Pacquiao (45-3-2, 34 KOs). "He is a fine boxer."

A boisterous 10,112 people at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino saw Barrera (63-6, 42 KOs) intent on proving his loss four years ago was an aberration, but he slowed down around the ninth round and the Pacquiao express rolled on for another win.

Unlike the first fight, there were no knockdowns but the anticipation of one kept the crowd on its feet as both Mexican and Filipino fans cheered wildly throughout the 12 rounds.

The fight began slowly and tactically as both fighters measured each other carefully. Pacquiao landed some straight lefts but couldn't land a solid shot. Barrera concentrated on working body and head combinations but nothing telling landed for two rounds.

In the third round both fighters stepped up the pace as Pacquiao landed a solid right hook while Barrera's three-punch combination scored. Neither fighter was hurt.

Pacquiao landed some left hands and right hooks, but every time the Filipino bomber connected Barrera rallied back furiously.

Like a firecracker that finally exploded Barrera landed several combinations. Pacquiao responded with some bombs of his own with both fighters firing with abandon in both the fifth and sixth round as the crowd erupted in delirium.

"I trained knowing he had to box me," said Pacquiao. "I was able to use my own boxing ability."

A slow-paced seventh round allowed Barrera to re-charge and perhaps Pacquiao too. A four-punch combo by Barrera might have stolen the round for the Mexican.

Around the ninth round Barrera lost steam and allowed Pacquiao to dictate the pace of the fight. From then on the Filipino fighter slowly but tactfully won three of the last four rounds.

"I got caught up during the exchanges," said Barrera, who was stopped in the 11th round in their first fight in 2003. "It was a mistake. I should have boxed more. I got tired."

The 11th round saw both exchange furiously again with a collision of heads possibly causing a cut below Barrera's right eye. During a break Barrera fired a right hand that stunned Pacquiao who wobbled around the ring in pain. Referee Tony Weeks deducted a point from Barrera for hitting on the break.

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All three judges scored it for Pacquiao 118-109 twice and 115-112 for Pacquiao.

"This was my last fight," said Barrera, who has been fighting since age 15. "He's especially fast and powerful."

Freddie Roach, who trains Pacquiao, said Barrera's boxing skills made it difficult to repeat his first knockdown, but he was still able to score enough to win the fight.

"He surprised me that he lasted all 12 rounds," said Roach of Barrera. "He has a lot of heart and guts."

Semi-main event

After winning the WBO world title in England, Steve Luevano returned to his home country where he gave a masterful display of a jolting jab to win a unanimous decision against Antonio Davis after 12 rounds. Davis was knocked down in the 11th round from a left hand counter during an exchange. In the 12th he was hurt by a left to the body but survived.

Preliminaries

Librado Andrade (26-1, 20 KOs) was dropped in the first round, recovered and was hit with vicious punches for six rounds and returned some on occasion, but in the seventh round a right hand to the body and a left uppercut sent Yusaf Mack down for the first time. Andrade followed it up with some more attacks to the body and down Mack went again. Referee Jay Nady stopped the fight at 2:34 for a technical knockout after the third knockdown. Andrade wins the vacant USBA super middleweight title.

"I thought the world was coming down on top of me. It was a beautiful shot he hit me with," said Andrade of is being knockdown in the first round.

After six rounds all three judges had Mack ahead, but Andrade took care of business with some powerful blows to the body.

"I hit him with everything I had. I got a little discouraged," said Mack (23-2-2, 14 KOs).

A junior welterweight duel between a pair of talented fighters saw former champion Steve Forbes win a split-decision against Francisco "Panchito" Bojado (18-3, 12 KOs) after 10 rounds. Both fighters showed exceptional skills offensively and defensively in an entertaining fight for boxing purists. The judges scored it 96-94 for Bojado, and 97-93, 96-94 for Forbes.

"His speed was really tricky. It was hard to hit him," said Forbes (33-5, 9 KOs).

Junior lightweight Vicente Escobedo (15-1, 11 KOs) had problems with Mexico's Miguel Munguia (15-9, 13 KOs) during the first three rounds and ate several uppercuts and right hands. But the Sacramento fighter who's now training under famed Nacho Beristain made adjustments that included a stiff left jab and cruised the last five rounds to victory. The judges scored it 78-74

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twice and 80-72 for Escobedo.

Left-handed Michael Farinas (18-2, 16 KOs) of the Philippines battered Mexico's Arturo Valenzuela (19-9) forcing referee Russell Mora to stop the featherweight contest at 59 seconds into the second round.

A body shot fired by Salina's Alejandro Perez (11-0, 6 KOs) stopped Mexico's Jaime Villa (5-3) for a technical knockout 27 seconds into the fifth round of a featherweight bout.