

Manny Pacquiao Squeaks By JM Marquez

Written by David A. Avila
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LAS VEGAS-A knockdown proved the difference for Manny Pacquiao earning a split-decision and the trifecta against his third Mexican champion Juan Manuel Marquez on Saturday.

Boy it was close.

Pacquiao (46-3-2, 34 KOs) seemed the stronger puncher for most of the fight especially with that deadly left hand, but Marquez boxed and countered his way for 12 rounds before a sold out crowd at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino.

It was a continuation of their fight that ended in a draw four years ago, and this time seemed just as close.

"I was on control of the fight," said Pacquiao.

A right hook by Pacquiao and a right hand counter from Marquerz were the big punches landed in the first round, a very tactical three minutes.

Marquez (48-4-1, 35 KOs) wobbled Pacquiao with a right left combination at the end of the second round. It was the first time anyone had visibly hurt the Filipino boxer.

The third round opened up with Marquez landing the same right-left combination. This time Pacquiao absorbed the punches better. Both clashed heads. A left hand hurt Marquez then another left hand on the chin dropped the Mexican fighter. Both exchanged violently at the end of the round.

"The knockdown did not affect me," said Marquez. "Just like in the first fight, one knockdown is not going to stop me."

Both fighters slowed down a bit in the fourth round to the advantage of the counter-punching Marquez. A few right hands found their mark for the Mexican fighter, but Pacquiao continued to press the fight.

The fifth round became a tactical battle with Marquez scoring a lot with the counter-right hand. He also fired a few shots to the body. Pacquiao scored one solid left hand but didn't land flush.

Marquez looked to be finding the range for that counter right hand. Though Pacquiao's punches were dangerous, Marquez continued to find the spot for his counter right hand in the sixth round.

Pacquiao stepped up the energy level in the seventh round. After letting Marquez set the tone, the Filipino began rushing more and landed a solid left hand. Marquez fought back but Pacquiao had the more punishing blows.

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A single right hand to Pacquiao's eye seemed to hurt the speedy power puncher. Subsequent left hands to the body forced Pacquiao to retreat. It was Marquez's biggest round since the second.

The ninth round began slowly with both measuring each other. For most of the round it was one punch at a time. Referee Kenny Bayless stopped the fight to check the cut on Marquez's bleeding eye. Both exchanged furiously at the end of the round.

Pacquiao took control in the 10th round with a single left hand bomb that resonated in the arena. He followed it with a number of punches but was unable to land the killing blow. It was a big round for Pacquiao.

The 11th round saw Pacquiao land a big left hand at the end, but everything before was the Mexican's round with his precise right hands and three-punch combinations.

It was anybody's fight. Pacquiao seemed looking for the perfect counter-left hand, then Marquez landed a big overhand right. The Filipino turned on the heat but couldn't connect solidly. Both exchanged at the last 10 seconds of the twelfth.

The judge Jerry Roth scored it 115-112 for Marquez while Duane Ford scored it 115-112 and Tom Miller had it 114-113 for Pacquiao.

"The people know that I won the fight," said Marquez. "I connected with more jabs and counter rights."

Despite the close decision, Pacquiao said he will not fight Marquez again.

"This business is over," Pacquiao said. "I had 24 tough rounds with Marquez."

Other bouts

WBO featherweight titleholder Steve Luevano survived a knockdown and jabbed his way to victory with a 12 round unanimous decision over Thailand's Terdsak Jandaeng (29-3, 19 KOs).

After hurting his opponent with a straight left in the first round, Luevano used his jab and feints to keep Jandaeng at the end of his punches for the first three rounds.

A counter left to the chin by Jandaeng dropped Luevano in the fourth. But the Californian regrouped and floored the Thai fighter with his own left, but the referee failed to rule it a knockdown. It was a crucial two-point switch that cost Luevano in the scoring.

"He got me good," said Luevano (35-1, 15 KOs) of his knockdown in the fourth round from a left uppercut to the chin. "He did hurt me. But I put it out of my mind and went to work."

The La Puente boxer resorted back to his jab to maintain his game plan for the next several

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rounds. In the eighth round a very low blow by Jandaeng forced a stoppage so that Luevano could recuperate.

Jandaeng tried bullying his way through but Luevano worked him like a skilled bullfighter and maneuvered out of danger.

“I controlled the fight with my jab,” said Luevano.

Mares wins

Former Mexican Olympian Abner Mares (16-0, 10 KOs) had his first serious test and passed with high grades against veteran Filipino Diosdado Gabi. After stunning Gabi in the first round, Mares dropped him quickly in the second round with a straight right hand.

Though Gabi beat the count, another attack by Mares culminating with a left uppercut ended the fight for Gabi at 49 seconds of the second round.

“I hurt him with my right hand,” said Mares, known for his left hook. “I knew he was hurt. My right hand was the key.”

The NABO bantamweight title was not at stake because Gabi failed to make the 118-pound limit. Mares keeps the title anyway.

“This victory was for my country,” said Mares, who was born in Guadalajara, but now lives in Montebello, California. “I want a title fight.”

Chicago’s David Diaz, who holds the WBC lightweight title, out-muscled Las Vegas boxer Ramon Montano in a 10-round fight. No knockdowns were scored but Diaz showed why many call him a 50s style fighter with his brawling attack. The judges scored it a majority win for Diaz 95-95, 99-91, 97-93.

Diaz was hoping a win would keep him in line to fight Pacquiao.