

ESPN WNF Recap: Lock Wins Late

Written by Michael Woods

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The importance of a trainer can be overstated. After all, the boxer is the one that has to decide, when his lungs burn chipotle hot and his legs are deader than the Clinton campaign, if he should continue. But having a guy like Roger Mayweather in your corner can do a world a good for a guy like Cornelius Lock, who prevailed in the tenth and final round over Roger Gonzalez in a super featherweight tussle from the Arco Arena in Sacramento, California on ESPN's Wednesday Night Fights.

Lock entered Arco with three losses on his ledger, but his cornerman Mayweather reminded him, "You've never lost with me." That knowledge, that little extra charge that comes when you know you have a little Derringer tucked in your boot, so to speak, came in handy as Lock and Gonzalez went back and forth all the way going into the tenth round, with neither man able to pull away. But it was Lock, with Mayweather's cocky exhortations spurring him on, who summoned a wicked right hook that stole Gonzalez' equilibrium, and led to a TKO win in the final frame. By the way, it's not as if Gonzalez was working with Clueless Joe Blow in his corner; Freddie Roach gave him instructions in between rounds.

Michigan's Lock showed the faster hands in the first, but those hands were low when the Californian Gonzalez hit him with a counter right that almost put him on his backside. But his legs didn't go rubbery and he returned the favor and then some, with a straight right. Gonzalez hit the deck. He got up immediately but took the mandatory eight. The bell rang right after, and who knows, that may well have saved him from a KO1 loss.

The lefty Lock rolled through the fifth, when Gonzalez started landing some body blows. Lock's jabs weren't meaningful, and too often, he loaded up, instead of taking something off, slowing it down, and upping his connect percentage. The sixth was tight, and it looked like conditioning would separate the two men. There were some boos from the fans in the seventh, and the boxers mixed it up in response. Lock whacked Speedy with a left that snapped his head back violently at the 40 second mark. In the eighth, Lock went mobile, and Gonzalez followed, with mixed success. He closed out strong with body work. In the ninth, Lock roared back, after his corner perked him up. The crowd liked that the fighters were in each others' face in the first half of the round. Lock caught Gonzalez in a corner and unloaded three clean blows, and earned himself the round, conclusively. In the tenth and final round, Lock scored a knockdown with a grazing left and a right hook, as Gonzalez tried to duck a blow, and Speedy looked woozy as he stood up. Lock banged him with a follow-up body shot, sending him to the mat, and the ref waved it off. He rose, after a minute, and smiled, and offered Lock congrats. The end, a TKO, came at 1:27 of the 10th.

Lock (18-3-1, age 32) weighed 127 pounds while "Speedy" Gonzalez (27-2, age 30) weighed 129 ½. He used to fight at 118 pounds, but broke his ankle and took 2005 and 2006 off, and says he has been recharged.

Lock was down in the punches landed department, 143-103, but he out-threw Gonzalez,

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528-370,

In the TV opener, Vicente Escobedo (18-1) took out Cristian Favela (15-15) in a lightweight scrap. The Nacho Beristain-trained 2004 Olympian, whose sole loss was to Darling Jiminez, Escobedo has learned from that loss; he was elusive against Favela, always popping, then getting those feet moving, and getting out of range. That's not to say Favela didn't get his hits in. He followed Esco doggedly for most of the bout. Esco ate a couple that half-rung his bell, in fact. The ex Olympian needs to patch a defensive hole that leaves him open to counter rights. The judges spoke, and saw Escobedo the winner, 78-74, 80-72, 80-72. Esco had the edge in punches landed, 224-175, and Atlas saw it 78-74, Esco.

SPEEDBAG Hallelujah, they did it. The riggers at Arco dimmed the house lights, so the focus was on the in ring action, as opposed to lighting up the crowd, to milk fan reaction. Smart. Others should be copycats, and follow this lead (cough cough, Showtime, HBO).

---FYI Gonzalez was overweight, but Lock agreed to let the bout go on, after Speedy agreed to fork over \$350. Does that strike you as chicken feed, or what?

---Hey, do you think Money Mayweather gave Uncle Roger the \$80 grand or so that Rog lost out on when he stepped away from Steve Forbes after Floyd said he didn't want his Uncle training the man who could upset the Oscar/Floyd rematch plans?