

Scary Showing: Diaz Hurt On WNF

Written by Mike Lynch
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For 10 rounds on Wednesday Night Fights, fight fans were treated to an action-packed USBA Welterweight title match between two hungry pugilists at career-crossroads. Unfortunately, the evening ended in boxing's nightmare scenario.

Unable to answer the bell for the 11th round of the scheduled 12-rounder, Oscar Diaz's knees buckled as he collapsed into the ropes upon standing up from his stool. Paramedics rushed the ring and he was laid on a stretcher and administered oxygen immediately. No word on his status, but he was taken to Santa Rosa hospital in San Antonio. Fortunately, the paramedics were in the ring very quickly.

Diaz, whose right eye was nearly swollen shut, was clearly behind in the bout, but he never showed signs of serious fatigue or other problems in the ring. His reach disadvantage made getting to his opponent, Delvin Rodriguez, difficult. But when he was able to get inside, he usually got the better of the exchanges. In fact, the right hand he landed to Delvin Rodriguez's jaw in the 4th round was the most impressive and jarring shot of the fight. Diaz would have put most fighters down with the precise and powerful pop. Rodriguez was stopped in his tracks by the shot, as his entire upper-body spun with the blow, but he stayed on his feet.

Rodriguez gathered himself and responded with some flurries to close the 4th, one of the only rounds that he did not seem to win.

Rodriguez was able to win nearly every other round by simply using his reach advantage to carve up the more compact Diaz from the outside. Diaz tried his best to work inside, but was only sporadically effective as his hometown fans chanted "Oscar" over and over. Anytime Diaz was able to do any damage with his right, he was unable to follow up with a strong left hook. Both fighters spent most of the evening ignoring their left hands during the heated exchanges, but it was Rodriguez's ability to effectively work from the outside that made the difference

Talk of the bout is trivial on a night like this, however. We all pray that Diaz is okay and that his ailment was no more serious than exhaustion. He and his family are in our thoughts

Rodriguez, based out of Danbury, CT, took a major step forward with the win, improving to 23-2-1 in his career, with 14 kayos. The Dominican-born fighter's career was derailed from the fast track with his March 2007 TKO loss to Jesse Feliciano, but he has now come back with 3 straight wins since then.

Obviously, the welterweight division is as deep as any in boxing, but Rodriguez has a chance to work his way up to a prominent fight with continued success. In Teddy Atlas's expert opinion, Rodriguez must improve his left hand to become a more complete fighter. Rodriguez is a nice precision puncher from the outside, but he lacks the explosiveness of the elite fighters at 147 pounds.

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We offer our congratulations to Rodriguez, but more importantly we pray for the health and well-being of Oscar Diaz.

Earlier in the evening, Terrence Cauthen took on Alexis Camacho:

Alexis Camacho entered Wednesday night 16-0 in his career. Perhaps more impressive than the undefeated record was the fact that he had knocked out each of his last 15 opponents. However, Camacho had never stepped into the ring with an opponent with more than 10 professional wins before Wednesday night.

Terrance Cauthen, for all his faults, is clearly a cut above anything the Austin fighter had seen. Cauthen, one of the trio of Philadelphia fighters in the '96 Atlanta games, won a Bronze medal in those games and has 32 professional wins in his career. He's gone the distance with the likes of Paul Williams. And further complicating matters for Camacho, Cauthen is also a slick southpaw.

Needless to say, it was a frustrating evening for Camacho, as Cauthen took the unanimous decision in the 8-rounder. Cauthen improves to 33-4 in his career, but with just 9 knockouts in his career and an evasive style, his career has little room for growth.

In the 8-rounder, Camacho was able to land only 33 punches on the fighter who might as well be named Terrance Caution. The fight was Cauthen's first at welterweight since August of 2005, after spending the last several years at junior middleweight.

SPEEDBAG: NBC made its Olympic coverage team official on Wednesday. Teddy Atlas, who called the fights on Wednesday will be calling Olympic boxing for the 3rd straight time. He will be joined by Bob Papa, who will be working his 7th Olympics....HBO's Jim Lampley will be the day-time anchor. Lampley will be working his 14th Olympics, the most of any television commentator ever. Congrats, Jim.