On the short walk from his locker room to the ring Saturday night, Vic Darchinyan was vilified by the highly partisan crowd at the Home Depot Center outside of Los Angeles, a crowd clearly supportive of unified WBA/WBC super flyweight champion Cristian Mijares. As an angry Darchinyan waited, Mijares walked in behind him like a popular politician rather than a fighter, smiling, nodding, even accepting a kiss from a woman standing near ringside before he slipped between the ropes and was assaulted for nine rounds by the apparently permanently irked IBF champion.

Mijares had done his best for weeks to deflect Darchinyan's menacing and often insulting threats and he had succeeded. Without question, Mijares had won the charm battle. But once the fight began, Darchinyan won the harm battle, just as he'd promised so loudly that he would, and in boxing that's what really counts on Fight Night.

Despite having been portrayed as an all-out aggressor with only primitive defensive skills, Darchinyan went much of the fight without even being hit. Instead, he forced his will upon Mijares from the outset, dropping him in the final seconds of the first round with a stinging left uppercut, bloodying his nose and raising swollen welts and bruises under and around his eyes before finally knocking him out with a mind-freezing straight left hand, the last of what had been a 27-minute long tornado of such lefts, in the waning seconds of round 9.

That left hand sent Mijares spinning to the floor so wildly his body twisted to one side like a fallen top after he landed on his back. Referee Lou Moret could have counted to 10 but, frankly, why bother? By that point in what had been a stunningly one-sided fight, there was no need to count at all. There was a need to call an EMT and almost immediately one was on hand as the ringside physician leapt into the ring on the outside chance Moret was a little braver than would have been wise.

He was not but this was not an issue of bravery or charm. This was an issue decided by one little man who made good on every one of the dark promises he'd made the past few weeks. Not only the one that said this fight would end just as it did but rather the one that said he was much more than most boxing experts thought he was.

"I promised to destroy him and knock him out,'' Darchinyan crowed as usual. "Each round I caught him with hard left hooks. He took a lot of left hands.''

Indeed he did but few people expected it outside of the Armenian's tight circle. A pre-fight poll of 32 fight writers came down on the side of the slick-boxing Mijares by a vote of 26-6, strongly backing a fighter ranked in the top 10 on most pound-for-pound lists and considered not only a charming fellow but a snake charmer in the ring whose boxing skills could mesmerize and, eventually, maul the kind of wild-eyed aggressor Darchinyan represented.

Then the fight began and less than three minutes into it Mijares was on the floor. It would seem

fair to say he never recovered. But what was more disconcerting was the great difficulty he was having hitting Darchinyan, who will never be known for his defense.

Although Darchinyan's defense was indeed improved this was in large part a result not of anything Darchinyan was doing defensively but rather because Mijares became quickly daunted by Darchinyan's power, accuracy and the unpredictability of what angles he might be attacking from.

What resulted from this was a Mijares who was reluctant to throw and unable to keep Darchinyan out of punching range. The moment he concluded Darchinyan's left hand was far too much for him, Mijares had no antidote for the IBF champion's constantly fearless pressure. That problem quickly forced Mijares out of the fight he should have been fighting – a boxing match in which he stood tall and used his right jab and reach advantage to control the fighting distance – and led him into a brawl inside a barber shop. Once Darchinyan trapped him there, Mijares could do nothing but get clipped.

"I was supposed to box him,'' the sad-eyed Mijares said after he'd been dethroned. "I fought with my heart and not my head. I felt overwhelmed by Darchinyan's style. I fell into a trap.''

It was one from which he could not extricate himself as round after round Darchinyan pounded him with straight left hands and short left uppercuts on the inside while doing a surprisingly effective job of avoiding being hit himself much of the time. At the moment the fight was stopped, Darchinyan led 79-72 on all three judges' cards, meaning they'd all given him every round but one. Although the pronunciation might be different it was a rout in English, Spanish and Armenian.

When the belts were finally draped around the waist and over his shoulders as if he were a delivery man at a clothing store, the first unified 115-pound champion in boxing history couldn't help himself. Darchinyan reminded everyone once again that he is not only a harmful person in the ring but also still one when a touch of grace might have been warranted.

"To all the writers and reporters in boxing, did I keep my promise,'' Darchinyan (31-1-1, 25 KO) said. "What about MY pound-for-pound ranking (he presently has none)? Mijares was No. 6. I know many reporters didn't give me a chance but I always knew and felt I was the better fighter.''

That was obvious from the start but what was most shocking was Darchinyan's apparent hand speed advantage. It seemed more a result of Mijares becoming hesitant after being dropped in the opening round and hurt several more times early in the fight by Darchinyan's power. Unable to match it or avoid it, Cristian Mijares became daunted, a human enough reaction but not one terribly helpful to a boxer in such a predicament.

Cristian Mijares knew he had no answers for the questions Vic Darchinyan was asking of him. They were chin questions that finally left him lying on his back, a place in a boxing ring that is not very charming at all.