Written by Michael Woods
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For the record, the names of the three judges who dropped the ball, in a big way, at the Toyota Center in Houston, Texas on Saturday night are Raul Caiz Jr., Gale Van Hoy and Tom Miller. These three “experts” called the Chris John/Rocky Juarez HBO Championship Boxing featherweight title fight a draw, and it is hard to fathom how they came to this conclusion. John was the sharper hitter, showed far superior ring generalship and he threw almost four hundred more punches than Juarez. He landed 150 more than Juarez, for the record.

Please put the names of these judges in a special file marked “JUDGES IN NEED OF A VISIT TO THE OPTOMETRIST,” because this decision was a SEVERE stinker.

John (age 29; 125 ¼ pounds; 42-0, with 22 KOs entering; from Indonesia) and Juarez (age 28; 125 1/2 pounds; 28-4, with 20 KOs entering; from Texas) clashed for John’s WBA featherweight crown. John set the tone and pace, and while Juarez roared back late, it was too little. At least it was to my eye. The judges scored it 114-114 across the board, though, which enabled John to hold on to his crown. The crowd was totally silent at the draw decision. Don’t believe me, or your own eyes. How about Compubox, which said that John won the stat war, 344-1190 to 206-797.

“What can I say? I think I won,” John said. Amen to that. Everyone but a couple of folks named Caiz, Van Hoy and Miller agree with you.

This was Rocky's fourth crack at a major title. He'd be better suited if he hooked up his mtachmaker with a sweeter Christmas bonus next time, because he needs to get a fifth try against a less skilled technician.
If there are watchers and readers out there who saw the fight the same as Caiz, Van Hoy and Miller, feel free to state your case. Harold Lederman scored it 116-112 for John. He gave Juarez four rounds, while I scored it 9-2-1 for John.

John, more of a mover than Rocky, popped the jab in the first. Juarez and he were both pretty busy from the start. Juarez went to the body to start in the second. He was in forward mode, boring in on John, who tried to stick, and move. In the third, John tried to set the tone and pace. He slipped smartly, and mostly steered clear of Juarez’ left hook.

In the fourth, John jabbed, jabbed and then followed with a right cross. He sometimes came with the uppercut to mix it up. His energy level didn’t wane at all; he bounced jauntily, and sent a message to the judges that he came to Texas in shape and ready to rock. In the fifth, Juarez impressed the crowd after he landed a right. The distance between the two tightened up some. Maybe John was getting a bit tired? Or maybe he didn’t fear Juarez’ power, and figured he’d stand and sit down on his punches more as a result. Juarez suffered a cut on his left eye in this round, from a crisp right hand.

In round six, John eyed that cut, aiming to exploit the blood. He used his 1 ½ inch height

advantage smartly, keeping Juarez out of his harm's way. John enjoyed a 134-87 edge in punches landed through six. In round seven, Juarez of course plodded forward, but without great success. Could he amp it up, bust out on John, and change the momentum? In round eight, there was more toe to toe action, and that favored Juarez. Did he win the round? Maybe.

In the ninth, John looked to get busier with his legs to start off. It worked. In round ten, Rocky slammed a couple left hooks, but John barely blinked. The Texan's face was scraped, puffed and red, the look of the loser. John looked admirably fresh after the tenth, while Juarez' right eye was lumped, and his corner needed the time to attend to his gash and to apply enswell. The fight was John's to lose, all he had to do was steer clear of a Hail Mary bomb. In the 11th, Rocky had him moments. He popped John with a right down the stretch that rocked his head back, and the crowd was wowed. Could he pull off another late stop, as he did in his last effort, a TKO11 win over Jorge Barrios in September 2008? In the 12th, John chose not to run, or flurry and clinch. Maybe not a good idea, as Rocky snapped his head back a number of times. It was a solid run in the home stretch for both men. The judges would have the final say.