

Rigondeaux Wins On ESPN, Goes To 3-0; Grano Upsets Kauffman On ShoBox

Written by Michael Woods

Thursday, 17 September 2009 19:00

Some say there hasn't been a better Cuban who has jumped ship, sort of literally, from the amateurs to the pros, than Guillermo Rigondeux, who in his third pro fight took on a veteran of 62 pro bouts on a special edition of Friday Night Fights at the Fountainbleu Hotel in Miami. Hard to say so early if the hype will prove true, but we can say that Rigo is one to watch for the near future. And we can also say that his opponent on this evening needs to seriously question himself if he wants to box for money any more, because it sure as heck looked like Giovanni Andrade quit in the third round after taking a mediocre body shot. The time of the TKO stop was 2:53

"It was a well placed shot," analyst Teddy Atlas allowed. Brian Kenny also allowed for the possibility that the shot was legit. But both men mentioned during the two plus rounds that the word on Andrade was that he'd quit in a bout, and sized up his body language as the look of a reluctant warrior.

Rigondeux (born in Cuba; two time Olympic gold medalist; age 28; now), who tried to defect from Cuba in 2007, was then dropped from the Cuban program and subsequently succeeded in exiting Cuba in February, went to 3-0. By the way, he was supposed to be 122 pounds, but showed up at 126. He dropped two pounds and then the opposing camp said that was OK. Andrade (from Brazil; age 39; 121 1/4) dropped to 51-12. His wins must've come against sub journeyman competition, because it was hard to fathom how, even when properly motivated, he could win 50 times.

In the first, the Freddie Roach-trained Rigo showed a pleasing level of intensity. He pawed with the jab, preferring to score big, with a power left. He'll lull a foe to sleep, with a slow tempo, and then rip off a fast flurry. Andrade yelled at Rigo to show him the goods at 1:50 of the second; be careful what you ask for, sir, a viewer could've said. Bang, a right hook hurt Andrade, and he went down two seconds after, to one knee. He got up, ate five to the body, and again yelled at Rigo. Then he gestured to the crowd. Generally, he was acting in a slightly bizarre manner. In the third, same thing. Andrade stumbled, and yelled at Rigo, and a few times leaped at Rigo with wild tosses. He hit the floor from a left to the body, stood up at six, and then shook his head, No Mas.

Teddy Atlas absolutely commented on Mayweather weighing 146 pounds, and not making the 144 catchweight. "As a trainer...how much weight did he have to lose prior to making 147? Maybe he had to struggle to make 147. Maybe there was some disorganization in the preparation." Atlas cited the IRS lien of Floyd, which he still denies, and wondered whether Team Mayweather took a tougher foe after being off 21 months because, quite simply, they needed the dough that would come against a tougher foe. "Maybe some of that chaos in training destructed their plan to come in at 147," Atlas said. Freddie Roach said he sees Marquez taking the lead on Saturday, going against his counterpunching instinct. "He'll have to come forward and initiate the action and is going to be a little bit out of his element so I like Mayweather by decision," he stated in a taped piece collected before the weigh in controversy.

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Atlas said the bigger guy is the faster guy, and that Marquez is prone to cuts, which might play a factor tomorrow. "At the end of the night I think Mayweather's hand is gonna be raised, but it's gonna be a competitive fight, a tough fight," he said. Marquez would be better suited to fight from the outside, Atlas said.

ON SHOBOX:

If Tony Grano hadn't biffed Travis Kauffman in the groin, and then spit his mouthpiece out a bit later in the fourth round, would he have survived the frame? We shall never know, because after sneaky Grano used some tricky-vet tactics at Chumash Casino in Santa Ynez, CA on the main event of Showtime's ShoBox, he got enough of a second wind to press a winded Kauffman, and drop and stop the favored heavyweight. The time of the improbable stoppage was 2:56.

Kauffman (19-1; from Pennsylvania; 221 pounds; age 24) looked to be the smoother boxer in the first round, and tried to get off from a distance, while Grano (15-2; from Connecticut; 218 pounds; age 28) was able to land the jab some and do a little work inside. In round two, Kauffman went lefty, and then switched back. He caught a few head shots flush with his back on the ropes, which buzzed him. At the end of the round, he answered with a mean right cross on Grano. In the third, Grano looked a bit winded, and Kauffman didn't seem fresh as a daisy either. Kauffman came out strong in round four, and a fierce right staggered Grano slightly. He hit Kauffman low to buy some time but the action resumed quickly. Grano dumped his mouthpiece soon after. But he didn't fold—Grano turned the tide, with a counter right, and about ten head blows. Kauffman hit the deck with ten seconds left, tried to get up, and the ref didn't finish the count. At five, Wayne Hedgepeth saw Kauffman was too dazed to continue and that was that. It was one of the most surprising turns of events in a bout that looked like a foregone conclusion you'll see this year. Truly, Grano was on his last legs.

Nineteen-year-old California bantamweight Chris Avalos (12-0) kayoed underdog Giovanni Caro (13-8; from Mexico) at 2:15 of round four of their scheduled eight rounder in the TV opener. The loser went down hard, and he lay on his back, looking dazed, for a couple minutes. The capper blow was a sweeping right hand. Avalos was reaching, and it didn't look like it was the sort of launch that would do the job. "In order to sustain himself and have longevity, he needs to box," said co-analyst Antonio Tarver. "Ever since I saw this young kid, I've been in awe of his fearless punching power and his offensive arsenal, this kid has a bright upside, I just don't want to see him get in with a big, big puncher and have to exchange and then it's a tossup." Caro was up on all three judges' cards, and on the card of co-analyst Steve Farhood.