

Klitschko Stripped Bullets From Arreola's Gun

Written by Frank Lotierzo

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In a fight that was very reminiscent of the heavyweight title bout between champ Lennox Lewis and the hard punching challenger David Tua back in 2000, current WBC champ Vitali Klitschko shut down and shut out hard punching challenger Cris Arreola this past Saturday night. Like Tua before he fought Lewis, Arreola said in the run-up to the fight that he was gonna come out and throw bombs at Klitschko while continuing to pressure him for as long as the fight lasted. And like Lewis, Klitschko let Arreola know there was going to be a big price to pay for coming in right at the onset of the fight.

Vitali Klitschko is an extremely smart fighter. He understands his own strengths and knows exactly what his opponents will try to do to beat him, and more importantly what he has to do to neutralize them. Klitschko knew that Arreola's only chance to beat him was for Cris to get inside and try to turn the fight into a brawl or street fight. In order for Klitschko to prevent that from happening he used his jab and lateral movement.

With Arreola not having a lot of experience Klitschko excelled for two reasons. The first being his jab is powerful and when he touched Arreola with it early in the bout, like Tua found out fighting Lewis, Arreola realized that he couldn't just go after Klitschko as if he were handcuffed or he'd open himself up more for Klitschko's right hand and left-hook. The other thing that Klitschko exposed about Arreola is he didn't know how to cut off the ring and get past and inside of his left jab. Add to that Klitschko's ability to punch on the move -- it was easy for him to hit and time Arreola who was just moving forward as opposed to putting definitive pressure on him.

For Arreola to beat Klitschko he had to get inside and utilize his big left-hook. Due to his inexperience and Klitschko's mobility, Cris continually followed Vitali around the ring looking to land his right hand from outside - something that he had little success in doing. Vitali took advantage of Arreola's lack of head and upper-body movement while being pressed by him in a manner in which Cris was right there to be hit with steady jabs and one-twos when Klitschko felt no fear of retaliation.

Pressure is supposed to force the opponent to do and go where he doesn't want to, along with making him rush his punches and fight with a sense of urgency and need. Arreola was never able to make Klitschko uncomfortable and allowed him to pick his spots and get off to the head and midsection which ultimately sealed his fate. Klitschko is a tough guy to fight and you have to be doing something in there at all times when fighting him. You can't wait and try to react to what he does. Arreola was unable and didn't know how to prevent Klitschko from being able to freelance and that was a huge factor in the fight. And the few times he ceased moving towards Vitali, Klitschko inched towards him and scored with his jab and counter right hands.

Chris tried to push the fight but he clearly wasn't pressuring Vitali effectively. Compounding the issue for him was the fact that Vitali Klitschko can not only fight while moving laterally, he can also change directions and be just as effective moving to the right as he is to the left. Lennox

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Lewis turned David Tua inside out going to the left and rendered him as ineffective as Klitschko did Arreola, but Klitschko is clearly better than Lewis was moving to the right.

This was the most complete fight of Vitali Klitschko's career. He looked comfortable and sure of himself at the weight. On several occasions Klitschko used one of the oldest tricks in the book with moderate success. That was during lulls of the fight Vitali grabbed Arreola's left hand with his left hand and pulled it down as he came over the top with a right hand. Although he didn't hurt Cris with it, he did score a few times doing it and in the process gave Arreola something else to think about.

Most will focus on Arreola's ineptness and all that he could've done, but there's much more to it than that. Granted - Cris has some things to learn but how many other heavyweights in the world could've shut him down and forced to him to fight uphill for the entire ten rounds like Vitali did? Klitschko's showing was impressive. He showed that he can move and throw an assortment of punches. That said he wasn't able to put Arreola down nor did he ever have him in serious trouble or close to going down.

Klitschko's mastery of Arreola was so one sided and dominant that his corner stopped the fight after the tenth round much to Arreola's protest. The stoppage was somewhat of a surprise due to the fact that Cris wasn't being badly hurt or damaged and Vitali wasn't going all out for the knockout. That said, Arreola's corner will not be questioned or put under a microscope here.

In losing Arreola didn't damage his career. He gained a lot of fans and anyone who saw the fight realized he did the best he could with what he had. He was beaten by a more experienced and superior fighter, and there's no shame in that. HBO won't toss Cris to the curb if he indicates via his life-style that he's more concerned with getting better as a fighter than he is partying. Arreola won the crowd over and there are plenty of fights in the heavyweight division for him that can be made to bring him back. Hopefully, his disappointment and emotional outburst after the fight will motivate him. It's not a reach to believe Arreola still may capture a piece of the title somewhere down the road. Actually Cris matches up better with IBF/WBO title holder Wladimir Klitschko than he did Vitali. And at age 38 it's not like Vitali will be around a whole lot longer.

Vitali Klitschko may not be the biggest puncher or most technically proficient heavyweight you'll ever see, but he's smart and strong, takes a good punch and exhibits an outstanding workrate. He also has the capacity to change directions on the move. And just as importantly, Vitali keeps himself in shape and studies his opponent. Vitali also ties up his opponent better on the inside than any Eastern European heavyweight ever. Those things enabled him to win every one of the ten rounds the fight lasted with Arreola and further cemented his place alongside of his younger brother Wladimir as being one of today's top two elite heavyweights in the world.

The pro-American heavyweight nonsense that was brought up after the fight on HBO is old and tiresome. Who cares where a fighter is from? That's never an issue in any of the other major sports. The fact is neither Wladimir or Vitali Klitschko have ducked a single fighter since they've been on top. That's all that real boxing observers can ask for along with them always showing up in great shape and putting forth their best effort. And that's never been an issue for either of

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the Klitschko brothers.

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