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What the boxing world saw this past Saturday night during the Pacquiao-Cotto bout was—an all-time great fighter (Pacquiao) take apart and separate himself from a terrific/upper-tier contemporary fighter (Cotto). Miguel Cotto's heart and will are on par with any fighter you'll ever see. But Manny Pacquiao's speed, power, skill and equal will were too much for him.

At the start of his WBO welterweight title bout with Manny Pacquiao this past weekend, Miguel Cotto came out measured and pushed the fight from behind his left jab. In the early going it looked like a good plan. Pacquiao was forced back physically and couldn't get into a rhythm. And with Cotto able to dictate with his jab, he was able to fight at a pedestrian pace while keeping his hands up without getting countered by Pacquiao's four and five punch combinations with the intent of taking his head off. The pedestrian pace was to Cotto's advantage, but Pacquiao wouldn't have any of that, at least not for long.

Another thing Cotto was able to accomplish and it was a turning point in the fight— he got close enough to whack Pacquiao's body and head with his vaunted left-hook. The turning point came when Pacquiao not only didn't wilt from it after Cotto connected, he acknowledged it and then erupted with his full repertoire of jabs, hooks and crosses that hurt Cotto physically, leading to the one-sided going over he absorbed until the fight was stopped 55 seconds into the twelfth and final round.

This fight was decided by Manny Pacquiao's two-handed power that comes from all angles, via five and six punch combinations that seem almost to be ceaseless. Once Pacquiao got through with some stinging lefts that Cotto didn't see but sure felt, Miguel didn't force the fight after that and fought as the counter-puncher with the hope of landing a lottery punch. Only Pacquiao didn't allow that and once he sensed he had Cotto's respect, he intensified the pressure and picked up his work rate.

Before the fight it was bantered about as to whether or not Cotto had recovered from the beating he took from Antonio Margarito a year and a half ago, along with how he might be bothered and affected by coming down to 145.

After watching the fight and seeing what took place during the bout, it's clear for all to see that Cotto wasn't damaged goods heading into the fight. And that he told the truth when he said he wasn't affected emotionally or physically from the thrashing he absorbed from Antonio Margarito. There's no way in the world he would've come out as confident as he did at the start of the fight against Pacquiao if that were the case and he was still haunted by the monster of Margarito.

Furthermore, after going down in the third and fourth rounds and being shook pretty good, he came out and won the fifth round, preventing Pacquiao from steamrolling him while he was still vulnerable. So forget the thought Pacquiao beat a damaged version of Cotto. Granted, it may not have been the best Cotto we've ever seen. At the same time it's hard to picture any other

welterweight taking Miguel apart like Pacquiao did.

The other issue prior to the fight was the 145 catch-weight stipulation. And even that can't be pointed to as to the reason why Pacquiao had his way with Cotto and won at least eight of the eleven rounds they fought before stopping him in the last round. Sure, he may have been a little stronger had he carried a couple more pounds and maybe his left hook would've shook Pacquiao a little more. But enough to believe it would've altered the outcome of the fight? I can't go there. No, the fight was too one sided to believe that. The bottom line is Manny Pacquiao is a great fighter and Miguel Cotto is a terrific one.

Pacquiao once again demonstrated that he has blinding hand and foot speed, explosive and shocking power, throws punches in multiples of five and six, and never tires. However, Pacquiao revealed something else and it makes him even more scary if you're a future opponent of his. And that is Manny has a cast-iron chin and isn't slowed when he's whacked to the body by a fighter who's known for being a terrific body puncher.

Miguel Cotto caught him with some massive left-hooks to the head and body during their fight. Pacquiao was perhaps rocked or briefly shook once or twice but recovered and fired back like Aaron Pryor did against Alexis Arguello in their first fight back in 1982.

The undeniable impression I was left with after watching Pacquiao in the ring with Cotto for twelve rounds is - he's physically tougher and takes a greater punch than I gave him credit for. Pacquiao also showed during the bout that he can handle adversity when he's confronted with it, something every great champion has had to prove at one time or another during their career.

Manny Pacquiao has answered all questions anyone could ever have about him as a fighter. His performance versus Miguel Cotto was almost virtuoso and solidified him as an all-time great pound for pound fighter.

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