

Puerto Rico's Juanma TKOs Mexico's Rafael Marquez

Written by David A. Avila

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Puerto Rico's Juan Manuel Lopez out muscled Mexico's Rafael Marquez who quit in his corner due to an injured shoulder. Lopez retains the WBO featherweight title by technical knockout on Saturday.

It figured to be Lopez's youth that would be the difference against Marquez's experience and in front of a small boisterous crowd at the MGM Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, it was definitely those young muscles that prevailed.

The southpaw Lopez (30-0, 27 KOs) figured to be the faster and stronger fighter and especially looked dominating in the first three rounds. Those right hooks seemed to shock Marquez (39-6, 35 KOs) and then a straight left sent the Mexican reeling across the ring. He survived.

Marquez found the antidote in the fourth round with some well-placed left hooks. One caught Lopez and nearly dropped the Boricua but he survived the onslaught. Lopez subsequently was penalized for holding Marquez's head and hitting with the other hand. Referee Tony Weeks deducted a point from Lopez.

The fifth round saw Marquez utilize the left hook as he pounded and pounded a still somewhat shaken Lopez. A right hand following a jab was the best combination of the fight for Marquez. It was also the last time anyone saw a right hand from the Mexican fighter.

From the sixth round on it was all Lopez. The Puerto Rican boxer moved inside and pummeled the Mexican. Though he sustained some damage himself, Lopez mauled his way to an eventual victory that ended at the end of the eighth round when Marquez could not continue due to an injury to his right shoulder.

"I can't move it," said Marquez, 35.

Lopez dropped to the ground in shock and gratitude. He absorbed some big punches from Marquez but fought his way to the technical knockout victory.

"I couldn't tell if he was hurt, he was so strong," said Lopez, 27, about whether he suspected Marquez was unable to use the right. "He's a good fighter."

Marquez said he had injured the shoulder before the fight but did not want another postponement. Still, the eight rounds proved to be very entertaining and a rematch is not out of the question judging by Lopez's promoter Bob Arum of Top Rank.

The rematch could be better than this fight?

Super Six

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When Glen Johnson was announced to be a replacement in the Super Six super middleweight tournament and face old friend Allan Green it figured that dropping down to 168 would be a problem for the 41-year-old Jamaican.

Forget about it.

Johnson was the aggressor throughout the fight and often out-jabbing the taller and quicker Green until catching him with an overhand right behind the left ear. Down went Green after two more blows connected and was counted out by referee Robert Byrd 36 seconds into the eighth round.

"He was leaning on that side all night," Johnson said of Greens turning his head. "I was just being patient."

One again, Johnson is in the middle of another world title bid.

"I had some ups and downs," said Johnson a former light heavyweight world titleholder. "But I never quit on myself."

Though two judges had Green ahead when the fight was stopped it seemed Johnson was ahead in most of the rounds. A good thing he ended the fight with a knock out win. But there was a note of sympathy from Johnson for his opponent and good friend Green.

"Allan is a guy I love like a brother," said Johnson. "My only regret is both of us can't advance in the tournament. I have to feed my family."

Green could have protested the marginal shot but simply said "he made a good shot."

Johnson remains in the tournament and gained three points for the knockout win.

Impressive.