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Undisputed lightweight world champion Juan Manuel Marquez survived a third round knockdown from Michael “The Great” Katsidis to whittle down the big hearted Aussie and win by TKO on Saturday.

It was a courageous effort but the sharp shooting prowess of Marquez (52-5-1, 38 KOs) prevailed over Katsidis (27-3, 22 KOs) before a large crowd at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. The Mexico City warrior now has opened a door to a possible a third Manny Pacquiao fight.

Going into the fight if you knew anything about Katsidis you expected the Aussie of Greek heritage to come in guns blazing. He did not disappoint.

After two rounds of textbook ring mastery by Marquez, a feint with the right followed by a left hook dropped the Mexican prizefighter in the third round. It was a nasty blow delivered with devastating accuracy.

“I was surprised in the third round but I recuperated well and got up,” said Marquez, who suffered three knockdowns in the first round against Manny Pacquiao and survived. “I threw the right and didn’t come back on defense.”

The problem is that Marquez got up. He usually does.

In the same third round Marquez slipped into hyper-drive and zinged Katsidis a few times before the bell finally rang.

“There’s no use in rushing in,” said Katsidis about being careful following his knockdown of Marquez. “I’ve seen a lot of guys come undone by him by rushing in.”

The fight was on.

Katsidis is the darling of fight fans with his devil-may-care offense that has only improved since his first loss to Cuba’s Joel Casamayor several years ago. He’s got more defense to go with that helter skelter offense.

“I knew I had to vary it up a bit,” Katsidis said. “Progressively I was getting on top of the guy.”

Slowly, Marquez took command with sidewinder blows to the liver and ribs and mixing in some uppercuts to keep Katsidis thinking. Despite some punches that would have sunk a heavyweight, the Aussie bored in at full speed.

“He was very difficult. He is the number one fighter with a powerful and strong style,” said Marquez of the Aussie. “We knew he was going to attack.”

It was a beautiful fight to see.

Though Marquez was winning most of the round after the third, it was clear that Katsidis was not going to retreat and look for cover. That's what makes him such a great fighter.

In the ninth round, it was clear that Marquez was setting up for a finale as he allowed Katsidis to take the lead while he merely circled away from oncoming boxer. It' s a scenario Marquez showed against Juan Diaz in their first fight. After a minute was gone, Marquez zoomed in for the attack and caught the Aussie with a semi-bolo punch uppercut and several right hands. Katsidis wobbled all over the ring and the end was clearly in sight. Referee Kenny Bayless stepped in and stopped the action at 2:14 of the ninth round for a technical knockout win for Marquez.

It was a wise decision.

After Katsidis brother Stethi died last month it would have been the greatest tragedy of all to see Michael continue to receive punishment in a nearly helpless position.

"Katsidis is a great fighter," Marquez said after the fight. "I always have hard people to fight like Katsidis."

Andre Berto

With a possible slot in the Manny Pacquiao sweepstakes it was Andre Berto who put his ticket in the ballot box with a one round demolition of Mexico City's Freddy Hernandez (29-2, 20 KOs).

Berto needed only 2:07 in the fight to hit the body then fire an overhand right to connect on Hernandez's chin for a one-punch knockout.

It was nice work for Berto (27-0 21 KOs).

Jason Litzau

Minnesota's Jason "All American Boy" Litzau (28-2, 21 KOs) proved the odds makers 13-1 disadvantage didn't mean squat as he out fought two-time world champion Celestino Caballero (34-3, 23 KOs) after 10 rounds in a junior lightweight fight.

Litzau bullied and mauled Caballero who looked out of shape, listless and sloppy. By midway in the fight, it was clear that the Panamanian did not have the power or technique to intimidate.

After 10 rounds Litzau was given a split-decision win 96-94, 94-96, 97-93.