

Vic Darchinyan Batters Mexico's Guerrero, No KO

Written by David A. Avila
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RANCHO MIRAGE, CALIF.-World champion Vic "Raging Bull" Darchinyan unloaded the entire arsenal to retain his WBA and WBC junior bantamweight titles but Mexico's Rodrigo "Gatito" Guerrero won fans over with his ability to take a punch and keep on throwing on Saturday.

A large crowd of more than 1,500 saw Darchinyan use his vast experience and firepower to keep Guerrero from landing the big blow at Agua Caliente Casino, but most fans were in awe of the kid's ability to absorb jaw breaking blows, one after another.

Guerrero, who is managed by former world champion Marco Antonio Barrera, came out swinging in the first round as Darchinyan evaluated the situation calmly for the first three minutes. After that the left-handed slugger began to zero in for the knockout. It never came.

Darchinyan fired left after left in rounds two and three and nothing seemed to faze the Mexican kid from Mexico City. Not even a smirk.

A big left by Darchinyan in the fourth round found its mark but Guerrero withstood the bomb and tried vainly to land something. Nothing seemed to work.

One thing Guerrero learned by the fifth round was that he could handle Darchinyan's punch and seemed more inclined to take more chances. Both fighters slugged it out willingly in the fifth round though the Armenian fighter used his experience to win the round.

"The head butts hurt me the most. He really didn't hurt me with his punches," said Guerrero astonishingly.

Darchinyan must have wondered what was going on and decided to test his left hand bombs once again. Nothing happened though he withstood three right hands it was the Armenian fighters round in a big way.

The Mexican kids chin proved to be able to withstand everything Darchinyan could throw, but he was landing maybe two or three a round. A big left hand wobbled Guerrero in the seventh but he retaliated by chasing the champion around the ring to the roar of the crowd.

It had to happen. Darchinyan finally began to tire in the ninth after landing so many blows to no effect. But the cagey veteran still managed to land an uppercut or two and some body shots.

"If I don't train hard, if I take this guy for granted, this is a much harder fight and maybe I lose," Darchinyan said. "He is a good fighter. He took all of my punches and kept fighting back."

After 12 grueling rounds, the judges scored it unanimously for Darchinyan. Max DeLuca 120-108, Marty Denkin 117-111 and Cynthia Ross 118-110.

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Guerrero thought it was closer. "I'm not happy to lose but I feel really good. I think people know now who I am and that I can fight and that I didn't come here just to lose or to just fall down," said Guerrero who only had 15 pro fights. "I came to fight and I came to win."

Maybe next time and against someone else.

The world champion Darchinyan wants his former conqueror Nonito Donaire next, but will move on if that fight is not made.

"I've got the belts, he knows where I am. If we don't fight it might be my last fight at 115," Darchinyan said.

Zappavigna Wins IBO Title

Lenny Zappavigna (23-0, 15 KOs) looked beaten and bloodied and several times his rat tail flung in the air after receiving punches but after 12 hard fought rounds the Australian held on to win a booed unanimous decision 116-111 twice and 114-113 against Ecuador's Fernando Angulo (22-7, 14 KOs).

Angulo could not win the title because he had weighed in three pounds over the required limit of 135.

The Australian lightweight jumped into the lead behind some stiff jabs and winging punches as Angulo merely waited patiently to see what his opponent offered. He almost waited too long as Zappavigna won the two rounds handily.

Angulo made his move in the third round behind a right uppercut and right hands. The Ecuadorian began firing combination punches and scoring effectively. By round six a small cut opened up on Zappavigna's right eye.

In the eighth round after an exchange of punches Zappavigna emerged with a bloody gash over his right eye. Referee Pat Russell ruled the cut was from a clash of heads and directed the Aussie to the ringside doctor. The fight continued.

Angulo may have pressed too hard in the ninth round and fired a punch during the break that forced referee Russell to deduct a point.

For the next three rounds both fighters let loose with combinations and disregarded defense. After 12 rounds Zappavigna fought through a gash over his right eye to win the IBO title.

Prelims

Glendale's Art Hovanesian (11-0-1, 6 KOs) survived a bad cut from a Hensley Stratchan (5-7-1) right hand in the fifth round, then charged the Bahamian fighter and landed a right hand of his own that caused a similar cut in the same round. Stratchan shook his head signaling he did not want to continue at 1:45 of the fifth round.

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New York City's Michael Anderson (5-0-1, 3 KOs), an amateur star, used his ring experience to catch the hard charging Anthony McDavitt (1-2) with two knockdowns in the first round. A right hand counter dropped the Long Beach welterweight early in the round, then a counter left hook finished the job at 1:13 of the opening round. Referee Jack Reiss waved the fight over.

A pair of New Mexico female prizefighters squared off in a junior lightweight match. Nohime Dennison (3-1) floored Jessica Sanchez (1-2-2) with a counter left hook and took control for the next four rounds. Sanchez rallied in the last two rounds behind a stiff left jab but it was too late to change the outcome. All three judges scored it for Dennison 60-53 twice and 58-55.

Dallas heavyweight Brent Urban (5-2, 4 KOs) scored a first round knockout over New York City's formerly undefeated Emad Ali (5-1, 3 KOs). A left hook wobbled Ali and several more blows convinced referee Jack Reiss to give him a count as he lay on the ropes. When asked to step forward he wobbled and the fight was called off at 1:25 of the first round.

Coachella's Danny Pantoja (0-2-2) and Ontario's Johnathan Arrellano (4-0-1) ended up a wild back and forth junior featherweight fight in a majority draw after four rounds. Both fighters had their moments and Pantoja captured the last round to convince the judges it was a draw. The scores were 40-36, 38-38, 38-38 for a majority draw.