

Mares Gets The Nod Over A Steamed Evil Vic

Written by Michael Woods

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If you were pegging this night as the one where you'd see Vic Darchinyan act his age, you were off base. Evil Vic looked sharp and his stamina put all age fighters to shame on Saturday night in Tacoma, Washington. But Abner Mares was a stubborn sonofagun, shrugging off a head-clash gash in the first to outthrow the vet and exit the Showtime bantamweight opener-semifinal with a split decision win.□□

There was real drama as we heard the cards from Jimmy Lennon after the tight scrap: the scores were 115-111 (Vic), 115-112 (Mares) and the tiebreaker was 115-111 (Mares).□□ Stats lovers will point to Mares edge in punches landed (196 to 176) and thrown (676 to 481). TSS-EM thought Vic landed the cleaner, more effective punches, by and large, and gave him the nod, but this was no robbery. Our man Al Bernstein saw Mares winning, while Antonio Tarver saw a draw.

In the 12th, the combatants fought a properly busy 12th. Both wanted it, needed it, tried to tell the judges that they deserved the final round. The judges would decide.□□ In the 11th, Mares pressed, and Vic felt some fatigue.□□ In the tenth, Vic stayed smart. He ate a few shots, including an overhand right near the end, but mostly hit and ran, in a good way. Get off, and get out, was his way.

In the ninth, Mares upped his work rate, knowing that the night was getting away from him. Vic wasn't getting off his gameplan, though. □□ In the eighth, Vic looked as confident as he had all night. His energy wasn't lagging at all. □□ In the seventh, Vic made Mares miss, and then made him pay, as he whammed and scrambled. A counter left jab put Vic on the mat with 1:35 left. One knockdown tallied for each man. He gestured that he slipped. No dice. His eyes and legs looked clear and strong. He made Mares reach, and pay with his left hand to the degree that he

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maybe evened up the round. In the sixth, Mares had a fab early round. But Vic wasn't going to let the momentum shift without a fight. Vic's lateral movement was still there, and a left one-two whopped Mares with 20 seconds left. Vic told the ref that Mares was going low, after the ref warned Vic for measuring.

In the fifth, Mares kept going to the body, when most guys would have switched to upstairs, since the ref was looking for a reason to take another point. Vic came up underneath with a left, scoring well. Mares wasn't bowing, though. In the fourth, Vic led with nasty lefts. Mares answered with some body blows, mostly with his right hand. The ref took a point for going too low with a minute left. Vic started holding more. Was the kid's pressure getting to him? Clem Medina told Mares he needed to pressure wisely, come in with a jab, not to come in whaling. In the third, the ref warned Mares for going low. The kid looked to press Vic, back him up. Vic liked the look of the blood coming into Mares' left eye from his brow. Maybe Mares pressed more because the blood messed with his mind. A straight left clanged Mares at the bell. Vic sent Mares to the mat in round two, off a left counter, after the kid had some success with ace body work. It was a flash variety knockdown, nothing too debilitating. In the first, a head clash caused a gash on Mares' brow. It was right at his hairline, deep and long.

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