

Ortiz Revives His Career With One Round And A Short Left...LOTIERZO

Written by Frank Lotierzo
Tuesday, 19 April 2011 16:03



photo by Neil Abramson

Heading into this past Saturday night's bout with WBC welterweight title holder Andre Berto 27-1 (21) challenger Victor Ortiz 29-2- (22) had many questions hovering over him. Questions about his heart, desire and stamina were at the top of the list. Berto was perceived as the tougher fighter mentally and emotionally and most observers and fans felt at the end of the day that would be the difference and Andre would most likely retain his title in what would be a pretty action packed fight. And that of course turned out to be half right.

For 12-rounds there was sustained action and each fighter scored a pair of knockdowns along the way. That's the good news about the fight. On the negative side the fight was conducted on

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one of the least developed levels of any title fight I've seen in quite some time. Sure, it was fun to watch, but for the most part it looked more like a Tough Man Competition between two in shape guys than it did a professional boxing match at the highest level.

When it was over Ortiz was a unanimous decision winner and is the new WBC welterweight title holder. More importantly he saved his career and will no doubt be a draw the next time he fights and like everybody else who's won a high profile bout recently (weighing between 140-147), his name will be mentioned as a future opponent for Manny Pacquiao assuming he beats Shane Mosley next month.

Ortiz proved that if you combine his power and aggression with a mindset that has something to prove, he's a dangerous opponent for anybody. At this time based on what he showed as far as his character, he met the burden of proof against Andre Berto and showed that his constitution deserves the benefit of the doubt.

The fight hinged on two things that favored Ortiz and ultimately turned the fight in his favor. Before touching on that, I must say that I do think Berto took Ortiz a little for granted in the back of his mind and banked on him folding and looking for a way out once the pressure escalated and things weren't going his way. And there were a few points during the fight that Ortiz could've packed it in if he wanted to but he never did.

Ortiz opened the fight like a hurricane and no doubt wanted to send the message to Berto that he wasn't some chump, that he could just show up wearing gloves and take his heart. Berto didn't seem at all surprised or bothered by Ortiz's tactic and his body language projected that he thought Victor would be doing well at the onset but once he emptied his wagon the fight would turn around in his favor, never to be relinquished. The only problem was Berto didn't count on getting worked over and having to endure so many big shots from Ortiz. Not only did Berto find out in the first round that Ortiz could hurt him with almost anything he touched him with, he also discovered that he wasn't able to find him with his counters with the ease he anticipated that he would.

Berto was hurt really bad in the first round and although I believe he recovered mentally, he never recovered physically and for the rest of the fight he was on unsteady legs. I think this was a combination of Berto not being in the best shape he could be in and Ortiz perhaps carrying a bigger punch as a welterweight than he did a junior welterweight. Regardless of the reason why, Berto never recovered from the beating Ortiz administered to him in the first round. And for the next four rounds Ortiz did all he could to keep the pressure on and tried to get Berto out.

Then in the sixth round it looked like the old Ortiz showed up and he was perhaps on the verge of hitting the wall and running out of gas. Berto seized on that and all of the sudden he was rejuvenated and dictating the tempo of the fight. Andre hurt and dropped Ortiz and it looked like he was now the predator and Ortiz was the prey, a complete role reversal of the first five rounds. And just as it looked as though Ortiz might be on the verge of succumbing mentally and physically, he nailed Berto with a short left inside that dropped him and for all intents and purpose swung the momentum of the fight back in his favor. And from that point forward Berto never really gained control of the fight.

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A lot has been written about how Ortiz answered all the questions most had about him. So remember when you're reading about or discussing the fight that it really wasn't such a sophisticated game plan that resurrected Victor's career. What it basically boiled down to was he really put it on Berto in the first couple rounds and Andre never recovered from the going over he was forced to absorb in the early going. And just when it looked like Ortiz was about to tire and open the door for Berto to gain control, he caught him with that short left at the end of the sixth round and shut the door on him for the rest of the fight. I'm just not totally convinced that Ortiz goes on to win the fight without that left that dropped Berto at the end of the sixth round. But he did and that's all that matters.

Victor Ortiz deserves a lot of props for his performance Saturday night. But the fight was basically won in the first round and sealed with a single left in the sixth round. And I'm not sure that answers all the questions that were out there before the fight, but it's a great start.

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Radam G says:

Ditto Masterweaving scribe F-Lo! Nothing that I can add to his fine copy! Holla!