

Bantamweight Wars: Abner Mares Retains IBF, Anselmo Moreno Retains WBA...AVILA

Written by David A. Avila

Sunday, 04 December 2011 01:05



ANAHEIM-Vindication for IBF bantamweight titleholder Abner Mares was unanimous in a dominating win over former champion Joseph “King Kong” Agbeko on Saturday in front of 4,000 fans.

Last summer Mares won a close and much disputed decision over Ghana’s Agbeko at the Honda Center that was marred by low blows, and missed head holding tactics by Agbeko. All was erased by the quicker and more precise head-hunting Mares.

Low blows were not an issue in this fight.

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Mares retained the title and eliminated all doubt by changing targets from the body to Agbeko's head and it proved beneficial at the Honda Center. There was no referee controversy in this match.

"I'm happy that my fans finally saw my true boxing skills, they saw the real Abner," said Mares. "You saw the last time and there was controversy. I proved I beat him the first time and I beat him again."

Mares didn't attack the body as much this time and it proved to be the right method of attack as he quickly jumped to a lead. Using quick combinations against Ghana's Agbeko he scored early and kept the challenger off balance for the first half of the fight. He also saved energy.

A cut over Mares' right eye from a punch proved troublesome but the Southern Californian was still pinpoint and more accurate than Agbeko. He landed 254 punches to Agbeko's 180 after 12 rounds according to Compubox.

"I knew I was winning the fight. And I closed the fight like a champion," Mares said.

In their previous fight this past August, both fought in a nip and tuck action clash. In this match Agbeko seemed to be looking for the knockout.

"I was told by journalists interviewing me that if I didn't score a knockout I wouldn't win," said Agbeko, who couldn't seem to land many jabs. "I felt like I did well."

All three judges scored it 118-110 for Mares.

"I'm ready for anyone or I'll go up to 122," said Mares.

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WBA Moreno Wins

WBA bantamweight titleholder Anselmo "Chemito" Moreno (32-1-1, 11 KOs) won a widespread unanimous decision over IBO titleholder Vic "Raging Bull" Darchinyan (37-4-1, 27 KOs), using his clever defense, a long jab and fluid combinations over 12 rounds.

Darchinyan opened up aggressively as always in the first round and seemed hell bent on going for the big bomb. It never came.

"I couldn't find him the whole fight," said Darchinyan. "He was going for the points and I was going for the knockout."

Though nervous fighting in the U.S. for the first time Anselmo proved to be one of the few to beat Darchinyan convincingly.

"He threw a lot of punches and I avoided them, that was the plan," said Anselmo. "Yes, he connected a few times, but so did I."

The next round saw Anselmo land a perfect left cross that shook Darchinyan briefly.

A crushing left hand connected on Anselmo but the Panamanian absorbed the blow well in round three. Darchinyan kept the pressure on and won the round. Anselmo said he was nervous and it showed the first three rounds. But after the left by Darchinyan connected flush, he seemed to find confidence.

Anselmo won the fourth round big by using a stiff and long right jab. Then Darchinyan was deducted a point for flinging the Panamanian at the end of the round and probably gave Anselmo a two point advantage.

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The Panamanian had his biggest round in the eighth as he landed multiple combinations including a snapping right hook. Darchinyan seemed to visibly tire in the round and seemed sluggish and looking to bide his time.

All three judges scored it for Anselmo 120-107, 117-110, 116-111.

"I look forward to coming back here and fighting many more times. He was a great boxer but so am I," said Anselmo. "I'm extremely happy and I've always wanted to fight the best. I hope the one who wins tonight will fight me."

Other bouts

Puerto Rico's Eric Morel, a former flyweight world champion, fought Mexico's Jose Silveira and won by unanimous decision after 10 rounds of a bantamweight match. Morel connected often but Silveira proved very durable. Two judges scored it 98-92 and the other 97-93 for Morel.

East L.A.'s Frankie Gomez (12-0, 9 KOs) knocked out cold North Carolina's James Hope (6-9-1, 4 KOs) with a wicked overhand right at 53 seconds of round three. Both fighters had equal speed but Hope had an elusive style that he complemented by effectively holding at times. Gomez slipped and countered and finally caught up in the third round during an exchange.

"I stayed calm and waited to counter but I knew he would move all night long so I knew I had to go for the knockout," said Gomez.

Norwalk's Carlos Molina (15-0-1, 7 KOs) rebooted himself and won an entertaining 10-round junior welterweight bout against Mexico's Manuel Leyva (18-4, 10 KOs). Molina hurt Leyva with a left hook counter in round six and nearly stopped him in the final round with a counter right hand that had the taller left-handed boxer wobbling. All three judges scored it for Molina 99-91 twice and 100-90. In Molina's last fight he lacked energy, but not this time. He out-worked and out-hit Leyva almost every round.

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Riverside's hard-hitting Richard Contreras (9-0, 8 KOs) remained undefeated with a fourth round technical knockout over San Bernardino's very under-rated Juan Sandoval. The battle of the Inland area saw Contreras blister Sandoval with rights especially in round three. Sandoval rallied a bit but Contreras was too strong and the fight was ended 38 seconds into round four by referee Tony Crebs.

Super middleweight prospect Omar Henry (11-0-1, 9 KOs) and former Cuban amateur star Lester Gonzalez (12-5-3, 6 KOs) were beginning to really make the fight interesting when both collided heads during an exchange. A nasty cut above Gonzalez's right eye caused the ringside physician to advise the fight be stopped at 57 seconds of round two for a technical draw.

Former super middleweight contender Sakio Bika (29-5-2, 20 KOs) moved up a weight division and slugged it out with iron-chinned Alfredo Contreras (11-13-2, 5 KOs) of Los Mochis, Mexico. Though Contreras was able to take the blows to the chin and jaw his eye couldn't and the fight was stopped at the end of round three. Bika was awarded the fight by technical knockout.

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the Roast says:

I went with this over the Cotto card. Mares-Agbeko was a good. Abner won a clean fight this time. 118-110 was a little wide but the kid has a bright future for sure. Evil Vic was out boxed by a wide margin. Vic was overly aggressive and paid for it time after time. I've never seen Moreno before but he was a solid boxer and Vic was perfect for him.