

Gary Russell Jr. Might've Scored The KO of the Year

Written by Lee Wylie

Monday, 12 November 2012 00:00



Check out the "Oh shoot" face on the lady at lower right. (Tom Casino).

We might have just have witnessed the knockout of the year from Gary Russell Jr. Saturday night. There've been some very good knockouts this year, namely Kessler's of Green and Garcia's of Morales, but what separates this one from the rest is the way in which the knockout came –the way it was set up.

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Here, I'd like to highlight exactly why I thought this knockout had that little something extra that the others didn't and why I feel it should go down as the knockout of 2012.

Firstly, at 5'5" and with a 61" reach, it was obvious to everyone that Gary Russell Jr. needed to get inside and beyond the height and reach of Roberto Castaneda. During the first and second rounds, Russell Jr. operated mainly on the front foot, releasing speedy jabs and combinations from his southpaw stance. Despite winning both rounds easily, Russell Jr. hadn't really imposed himself on Castaneda yet, who was using his length as best he could in order to stifle and keep Russell on the outside. Russell Jr. made a subtle tactical adjustment and the knockout transpired soon after.

The knockout took place in three phases.

1.



Russell Jr. began moving away on the back foot. Castaneda immediately followed. As

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Castaneda threw a jab up top, followed by a right hand to the body, Russell Jr. stepped away, avoided the shot and reset. Notice how Castaneda succeeded in getting his lead foot beyond the lead foot of the southpaw, Russell Jr. Even though he missed the mark with the right hand, there were some moments of encouragement here for Castaneda. But was Russell Jr. merely giving him false hope?

2.



Again, Castaneda lunges in with a right hand. This time though, Russell Jr. lands a short, compact left hook the body before stepping back out of range. Notice how Castaneda no longer has the outside position as he's stepping in. This time as he's trying to land his right hand, Castaneda ends up inside of Russell's right – shoulders and feet. In his eagerness to get forward and touch Russell Jr. Castaneda has forgotten about his positioning.

3.

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