

BORGES: Sergio's Career Rapidly Coming To A Close

Written by Ron Borges
Monday, 29 April 2013 08:21



Three things were obvious once the smoke cleared from a middleweight weekend of bomb throwing: Sergio Martinez is on the way down, Peter Quillin is on the way up and the former should stay as far away from the latter as possible.

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The 38-year-old Martinez looked every bit his age in barely escaping with a slightly generous decision over English challenger Martin Murray in the WBC champion's hometown of Buenos Aires and so did the 29-year-old Quillin in dominating and finally stopping overmatched Fernando Guerrero in his hometown of Brooklyn.

Everything Martinez was not Saturday night in a raging downpour that battered the 40,000-seat soccer stadium of Buenos Aires club Velez Sarsfield, Quillin was at the Barclays Center. While Martinez was twice knocked to the floor and left bloodied and in need of repair work on both a broken hand and a knee that will reportedly likely again need surgery, Quillin dropped Guerrero four times and staggered him repeatedly before the fight was mercifully stopped in the seventh round.

Quillin (29-0, 21 KO) showed his adept use of angles, quickness and power in nearly ending things in the second round when he dropped the challenger twice, first with a big right hand midway through the round and later with a perfectly timed three-punch combination that exploded in Guerrero's face.

Guerrero was game to a fault, struggling up and later surviving a third assault that nearly sent him to the floor again before the round ended but he had few answers for what the WBO champion brought to the arena. He did pressure Quillin with some heavy blows in Round 6 but the champion reacted by blasting him out in the seventh, driving him backwards for a standing eight because the only thing preventing Guerrero from ending up in the fifth row were the ropes before dropping him a fourth and final time so convincingly referee Harvey Dock stepped in and ended the carnage at 1:30 of the round.

While the young champion was dominant, the aging one had a painfully long night in which his slowing reflexes betrayed him and his sometimes unorthodox habits and a penchant for taunting opponents by approaching them with both hands dangling by his sides nearly led him to disaster.

All three judges scored the fight 115-112 but that was partly the result of an error (or perhaps something more dastardly) by Italian referee Massimo Barrovecchio, who ruled a right-left combination to the head by Murray had not been the cause of Martinez slipping to the floor in the inclement conditions in round 10. If one scores that round 10-8 the fight becomes either a

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draw (if you originally scored the round for Martinez) or a razor-thin one-point win for the champion if you had awarded him the round.

Either way, the larger story was that while Martinez had shown some slippage in his last few fights, he seemed this time to exhibit the irreversible loss of athleticism and reaction time that signals the end for all fighters.

You may recall in his last outing Martinez was coasting to a wide points victory over Julio Cesar Chavez, Jr. only to make a near-fatal mistake in the final round and get flattened. He arose on shaky legs and barely survived the final assault of the battered Chavez. Martinez won easily on the scorecards that night but was again the beneficiary of a dubious referee's call in that round when a second knockdown was declared a slip and when it was over he needed surgery to repair a knee thrown out when he collapsed to the floor.

Saturday night he again survived double knockdowns, a re-injured knee and a gash along his left eyelid but his victory margin was far closer and his performance seldom dominating once Murray opened up and began to attack him at close quarters.

While one can debate the decision somewhat it was certainly not larceny. Perhaps it was petty theft but the larger issue for Martinez and his handlers is that he left the arena with a victory that exposed his fading skills and slipping reflexes and once again challenged a body that has survived too many previous battles.

This is not to argue that Martinez (51-2-2, 28 KO) is utterly finished but he has become a dangerous man to make a match for now. Because of his technical flaws, his fading reflexes leave him far more vulnerable to attack and his chin appears to have been softened by time and tide, worn down to the point where it is no longer made of steel but now of less sterner stuff.

Whoever faces him next, assuming Martinez makes the mistake of going in that direction after what his promoter said would be a layoff for the rest of the year, will not assume the early defensive posture that probably doomed Murray's challenge. Had Murray turned up the heat on Martinez sooner he would not have been trying to battle back from so far a distance that not even a knockdown and all the troubles he caused Martinez late could fully close the gap.

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Certainly that would be Quillin's approach. He is young, aggressive, undefeated and hence cocksure of his place in the world. Once Martinez felt the same way but it is difficult to believe he left that rain-soaked arena Saturday night for another trip to another hospital believing he remains what he once was.

While his savvy and stiff right jab allowed him to hold Murray at bay late in the fight, a more confident opponent would have attacked Martinez more harshly earlier. Surely his next one will ask questions of his chin and those fading reflexes earlier and it is hard to believe he will still have answers if his questioner is Quillin or Chavez, Jr.

What happened to Sergio Martinez when Murray finally tried that was a warning sign, a caution to him that his time in the boxing ring is rapidly coming to a close.

"He has to quit boxing," Martinez's co-promoter Sampson Lewkowicz said before the fight if Martinez lost. The manner of Sergio Martinez's slim victory should not change Sampson Lewkowicz's opinion.

[Comment on this article](#)

jzzy says:

Martinez funky style has brought him a few nice paydays in boxing. He's an intelligent, decent fellow and should realize that clearly now is the time to move on from competition.

deepwater says:

chaves jr ruined him. ggg froch ward would kill him at this point. get a nice farewell payday and call it a day.

Radam G says:

Ditto Deepwater! Enough SAID! Holla!

amayseng says:

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Cherry pick fights u know u can win like Floyd.

Or.

Put your hands up, stop back pedaling and learn some defensive pivoting and footwork.

Or go to 154

dino da vinci says:

Can't leave this group unattended for a minute.

Carmine Cas says:

I agree with the latter two, change up the defense a little and learn to use the legs more wisely. And drop down to 154, now that his reflexes can't protect him from bigger men anymore it's time fight smaller more your size. I'd say try to get Canelo and Mayweather in the ring and after you heal up properly

deepwater says:

[QUOTE=amayseng;29812]Cherry pick fights u know u can win like Floyd.

Or.

Put your hands up, stop back pedaling and learn some defensive pivoting and footwork.

Or go to 154[/QUOTE]

you cant teach this 38 year old dog any new tricks. let him have 1 more handpicked opposition and then feed him to the top dogs.

brownsugar says:

Sergio will be out for the rest of the year rehabbing his injuries...
By the time he comes back his days will obviously be numbered.

I have to disagree with the TSS Alumni about Chavez being the reason Martinez was looking his age this past Saturday.

Martinez was always an undersized middleweight. But he's fought well against naturally bigger guys for most of his somewhat brief career.

What happened to Martinez is the culmination of the fights he's had throughout his middle 30's

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when he burst upon the scene with his scintillating KO of Cintron that was somehow overturned by an indecisive ref.

Pavlik... Williams... Barker...and Macklin (and even Dzinziruk) each individually laid more leather on Martinez than Chavez did.

If Martinez has actually grown old overnight It's the result of the cumulative punishment he's endured during his days at the top of the food chain.

Viva Martinez... It's been a fun ride.

amayseng says:

I didn't realize early on that Martinez reinsured his knee

and fought with a broken hand.

I was on him for not adjusting his footwork and hands and taking shots

which he needs to do regardless st times.

However with that broken hand he wasn't able to throw it and keep Murray honest or off him.

I'm sure the knee and fracture played a part.

He needs longer than 5 months off to rehab a ligament tear and repair.

Hope he comes back and has a few more paydays.

But not rushed.

Radam G says:

The threatre of the unexpected is often in play. And Sergio Marquez survived with injuries to fight another day. Never count a man out until you know. Because all true warriors fight on and keep their injuries on the downlow. They aren't looking to quit like a Viciousless Dick -- I mean Vic. Hehehe! Holla!

amayseng says:

True Radam. I was overly busy didn't read and rushed to judgement.

I've had a few fractured hands and couldn't begin to think about

hitting someone with them at all let alone half a fight.

That knee needs adequate rehab and time to heal.

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He should take prob a year off and cone back next may.

stormcentre says:

There is always the risk of a decline such as that which Borges describes of Martinez; when the style is relatively "free-style" such as Sergio's is.

Not in the least as one of it's major advantages soon, with age, becomes its weakness; the over-reliance upon reflexes, athleticism, agility and speed.

deepwater says:

[QUOTE=stormcentre;29899]There is always the risk of a decline such as that which Borges describes of Martinez; when the style is relatively "free-style" such as Sergio's is.

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roy jones is a good example of this.

stormcentre says:

[QUOTE=deepwater;29921]roy jones is a good example of this.[/QUOTE]

Precisely DP.

All the supposed weakness that;

- 1) Were strengths whilst the abovementioned attributes all worked in synchronicity.
- 2) Made opponents predictable and extremely vulnerable.

All became genuine weaknesses, as point 2 shifted from being an incredible strength to an inescapable weakness.

the Roast says:

[QUOTE=deepwater;29921]roy jones is a good example of this.[/QUOTE]

Also Mike Tyson.