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It was a victory for Kevin Johnson, of sorts. He went the distance with Vitali Klitschko on Saturday in Switzerland, and though the scores were wide in favor of big brother Vitali, the American didn't do what many folks supposed: fight down to his resume, and get steamrolled within a couple of rounds.

Klitschko (39-2, 37 KOs) retained the WBC heavyweight championship belt, but he had to work for it, a little bit anyway, as the unknown Johnson (22-1-1, just 9 KOs) proved elusive, and showed defensive smarts which kept him from getting dissected like previous Vitali challenger Cris Arreola 11 weeks ago.

The judges saw it 120-108, 120-108, and 119-109 for the Ukrainian born Klitschko, age 38. The 30-year-old Johnson, who talked some solid smack before the bout, surprising given the fact that his best win was hard to decipher when one appraised his resume, used a snappy jab to Vitali's chest to keep him at bay. He was loose from the get go, and didn't look like he was overwhelmed by his graduation to the big leagues. Johnson's head movement, maybe his strongest asset, kept Vitali from locking in on him.

If one is inclined to look on the darker side, one could easily find fault with Johnson for spending too much time in sparring partner mode: for too many minutes, he looked like he was there to help Vitali shed rust, and rarely set down with his shots, and looked to land a consequential toss. He saved the bulk of his fury for the end of the fight, when he stared down Vitali, bumped him, and shoved off little brother Wladimir, who went over to calm him.