Written by Frank Lotierzo
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This past weekend the boxing world may have watched Mexican icon Erik “El Terrible” Morales 52-8 (36) fight for the last time. Morales, who is a certain hall of famer and former pound for pound great no doubt knows that he's a shell of the brilliant fighter he once was. He's partaken in 60 professional fights and gave everything he had, win or lose, in every one of them. He's now an old 35 and during the last four rounds of his super-lightweight title bout with Philadelphia's Danny Garcia this past weekend, he was almost stopped and needed every last bit of resolve within him to make it through the 12th and final round.

In the end Morales lost a unanimous decision to Garcia by the scores of 117-110, 116-112 and 118-109, scores that are too wide for my liking. After 10 rounds I had it 96-96 and saw the fight as more competitive than the officials did. When it was over I had it 116-113 or 6-4-2 in rounds for Garcia.

Morales, who lost his title on the scale the day before the fight because he couldn't make the super-lightweight limit of 140 pounds, was competitive with Garcia for the first eights rounds. In fact, you could even say that after five rounds he was probably up in the scoring. But let's be honest, Garcia who is a likable fighter and decent guy is not yet a world beater at age 24. Danny was befuddled and really couldn't penetrate Erik's high guard and most of his three punch combinations were either short or only managed to hit Morales' elbows and wrists. Being that Morales guards the center-line so effectively, Garcia was forced to punch around his guard. The problem for Garcia was, Morales sees everything. So for the first five or six rounds Danny's edge in hand speed was nullified.

For the first half of the fight Morales' experience and technical superiority kept him in the bout. However, like most old greats who have lost some of their speed and reflexes, seeing everything isn't enough. Once Garcia shook off the jitters of fighting a legend and got into the fight, he took that step that all fighters must take at some point in a big fight and wholeheartedly committed to engaging Morales.

By that I mean Garcia got a little closer to Morales and put himself more in dangers way. Soon he realized that despite Morales knowing what was coming from the somewhat predictable Garcia, he couldn't stop it because he was too old and slow to react. Even when Morales had processed in his head, "here comes the right after the jab and the hook after the right," he was a millisecond late in stopping or blunting it most of the time. And once that became evident during the last third of the fight, Garcia began to assert himself more and started going to the body with both hands to finish his combinations.

During the 11th and 12th rounds Garcia was in complete command and finally separated himself from Morales. The only question that remained after Morales went down via a perfect left-hook to the point of his chin in the 11th round was whether or not he'd make it through the final round. He did and when you consider that it took an undefeated 24 year old with everything in the world to gain, 10 rounds to really seize the fight, it wasn't such a bad night for Morales. He didn't take sustained punishment and his face didn't look as if he was mugged after the bout.

The word "warrior" is often hurled at fighters, but in regards to Erik Morales it truly applies. He has nothing left to prove and fought everybody who was somebody during his career, multiple times. He's definitely not a 140 pounder (not that he can even make the weight anyway). Hopefully Morales is tired of depriving himself the life style and temptations of normal civilians and will only be seen ringside at marquee fights in the future instead of being used as a stepping stone on the under-cards of them by fighters he no doubt would've taken apart when he was the real Erik Morales. It was a great career that has been well chronicled since he stopped Daniel Zaragoza for the super-bantamweight title in September of 1997.

As for Danny Garcia, I'm not sure what to expect. He has quick hands and when his confidence is up, he can put some nice combinations together. Based on the Morales bout he seems to be a little predictable and relies on the basic jab, right hand, hook to drive his offense. He'll need to become a little more imaginative offensively and not stand in front of his opponents and pose after he cuts loose if he wants to hold off some of the other upper-tier 140 pounders coming for his title.

Garcia no doubt likes to mix it up and his confidence should escalate after beating a legend the likes of Erik Morales. He's a likable guy that has some things to work with as a fighter and potential draw. One would expect his promoter Golden Boy Promotions and Oscar De La Hoya to match him carefully if they can until he fully arrives as a world class fighter. At this time I could see him losing to any of the other super lightweights who are in line to fight him down the road. On the other hand, on the right night he could possibly beat the best of them with the exception of a few.

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ultimoshogun says:

This is pretty much the same way I see it...I felt the fight was closer than the scores indicate and for me the jury's still out on Garcia.

Radam G says:

I had the bout 6-6 in round. But 113 to 112 in points and a win for Danny because of the knockdown. Judging is kind of questionable nowadays. I'm convinced that most judges don't know syet about correct professional-style scoring. Holla!

the Roast says:

I was so mad after Kirkland-Molina I could barely focus on this fight. It was either that or all the Jack Daniels.

Radam G says:

Danggit, the Roast! Hehehehehe! What did Jack Daniels ever do to you? You just need some good, ole TUBA -- Pinoy homemade coconut wine. Now that it some strong jazzy ___ ____! It will shake up, but not wake you. I can't even handle it anymore. Did I ever tell you what it did to me? I saw the video, finally. Hehehehe! Holla!

the Roast says:

I do love coconut, bring it Radam G!