Written by Lee Wylie
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What's there not to like about Juan Manuel Marquez?

Heading into last Saturday night's HBO double header, the Mexican great Marquez - despite being a 38 year old blown up lightweight - was considered to be one of the absolute best fighters boxing has on offer. Nothing has changed. While his opponent, Sergiy Fedchenko, was

considered a good fighter with good skills, he was not considered to be of any real threat to a genuinely great fighter. This proved to be the case as Marquez - competing at 140 pounds - secured a wide, unanimous decision by using his vast array of skills to dominate his younger challenger. Marquez is now the interim WBO junior welterweight champion. Because Juan Manuel is held in such high regard, many were disappointed that he did not close the show and finish the fight within the distance. Despite the bout not being thrilling, Marquez still did what he was supposed to do - he kept himself in the winners bracket, and looked good doing it.

The same however, cannot be said of Brandon Rios, who not only failed to make the lightweight limit before his contest with Cuban-born Richard Abril, but also failed in showing anything in the ring that backed up many experts claims that he was one of boxing's best prospects. In all honesty, I believe Brandon Rios failed to win the fight. There have been mixed reviews of Rios' performance - which is reflected across the three scorecards handed in by the judges. Adelaide Bird had it 117-111 for Abril, while judges Glen Trowbridge and Jerry Roth both scored the fight for Rios - 115-113 and 116-112 respectively. How on earth three "experts " can share such contrasting opinions is almost beyond belief. Remember, judges are thought of as being better than you and I at analysing fights. It's times like this when something objective needs to be introduced into round scoring, as opposed to leaving round scoring to be the subject of opinion. But that's a debate for another time].

It won't be too long before we start hearing that Rios' lackluster performance was a result of him being dehydrated, or that the official should have deducted points from Abril for holding. Nonsense. The weight didn't beat Rios, nor did the referee. Rios was simply beaten by a better practitioner of the sweet science.

It was evident from the start that this was going to be a bad night for Brandon Rios; he had an opponent that was not going to just stand right in front of him. Abril used his superior height, reach and better footwork to control the pace and distance throughout the fight. Rios had no answer for Abril's jab or good defense in close. The reason Abril was not deducted points for holding was because Abril wasn't holding. Take a look at the fight again, Abril neutralized Rios' left hook in close by giving him nothing to hit apart from his left shoulder - standing side-on with his right elbow protecting his torso and his right hand protecting his chin, a Floyd Mayweather dynamic. There were occasions when the crowd seemed to be yelling for the official to pull them apart. Again, take a look at the fight. On those occasions, Rios still has one arm free which means there is no need for Vic Drakulich to get involved in the action - the ability to tie up is an important part of boxing. Besides, there was no more holding in this fight than there was in the second and third Ali-Frazier bouts. I've never heard anyone ever complain about Ali's tactics and excessive holding in that fight, have you?

Richard Abril was not only better from the outside, but he was better than Rios on the inside too.

In the end, the fight was somewhat reminiscent of Gene Tunney's winning effort over Jack Dempsey in 1927 - the swarmer kept at a distance and then neutralised in close. But make no mistake, Richard Abril is no Gene Tunney, and Brandon Rios is no Jack Dempsey - this bout was not so much about Richard Abril's skills, but about Brandon Rios' lack of. And this is why I

have no interest in seeing a fight between Brandon Rios and Juan Manuel Marquez. Don't get me wrong, Richard Abril is a clever fighter, who managed to frustrate Rios. Marquez on the other hand, is a great fighter, who would likely knock Brandon Rios out.

Let's think about styles for a moment, and in particular how Juan Manuel Marquez operates. A lot has been discussed with regards to Manny Pacquiao's stylistic transformation. While it is impressive, he is still in essence, the same offensive fighter - just a more refined version. Marquez on the other hand, has gone full circle - once a cautious defensive minded fighter who relied almost exclusively on his counterpunching ability, Marquez is now possibly the best offensive fighter in the sport as a result of his near-perfect combinations and boxing acumen. Watching Marquez in full flow - placing his punches around an opponent’s guard with precision and accuracy is one of THE best sights in boxing. I'm of the belief that he, along with Joe Louis and Julio Cesar Chavez, is the greatest combination puncher in boxing history. Sure, others have been faster like Meldrick Taylor and Hector Camacho, but none come close to matching those three in terms of the effectiveness and variation of punches. Marquez mixes them up - hooks, uppercuts and straights to the body and head just about better than anyone. Marquez' style would be a recipe for disaster for Brandon Rios.

Brandon Rios can only fight one way - straight ahead without applying head movement or utilising a jab. Against Richard Abril, who mainly threw single shots as a way to maintain distance, Rios was able to avoid heavy fire. This would not be the case against Marquez. Take a look at Marquez' most destructive nights where he has inflicted the most punishment on his opponents - Terdsak Jandaeng, Juan Diaz and Michael Katsidis. They were all fighters who applied relentless pressure on Marquez by attempting to walk him down. Fighters who come in looking to get Marquez into a brawl all suffer the same fate - they get knocked out. Marquez has never been stopped in 61 fights, because of his superb combination of offense and defense. The fighters who have success against Marquez are fighters who can make Marquez take the lead. Take a look at Floyd Mayweather. Apart from being much bigger and faster, Mayweather never really pressed the attack until late in the fight, he allowed Marquez to press the attack. Even this past weekend against Fedchenko, Marquez was not at his absolute best as a result of his opponent not getting into a firefight with him. Marquez gets the better of most exchanges [even against Pacquiao] because of the correctness of his technique when punching. When other fighters become ragged during exchanges, Marquez stays neat and precise - his 65% knockout ratio, which is higher than Manny Pacquiao's, is a testament to his punch accuracy.

I could see Rios probably touching Marquez more than he did Abril, because Marquez would be putting more emphasis into his offense, but ultimately, this would be his downfall. I believe during the exchanges, Marquez' straighter punches would override Rios' wider punches. Even at 38 years-old, Marquez would be the more dangerous fighter in the fight. Every punch is placed with maximum effect from Marquez.

Marquez would be too methodical and clinical for a crude, one dimensional fighter like Rios. Rios' inability to cut off the ring effectively, and move his head on the way in would cost him dearly in a fight with Marquez. This type of plodding pressure fighter plays directly into Marquez' counterpunching hands.

Consequently, at least there would not be any controversial decisions in the end between Rios and Marquez. The judges would be made irrelevant long before the final bell.

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**kidcanvas says:**

yep , rios showed how much hype and how much truth he is made up of . abril won no doubt. marquez would annihilate him in a few rds

**Radam G says:**

Optical illusions are what the game is about. It is all about the magic. And people can be constantly fooled with the same trick by the same d***! Basically for those who are not in da know, they always show. Oftentimes they get the seesee on the slowslow. The best of the best is often hanging or performing low. That is until you give one the best a BIG fish. KaPOW! For him that will be a big DISH! For what you want, watch what you wish. Juan Manuel Marquez would be deeply troubled by Bam Bam IMHO.

Bam Bam is a young lion who fights up or down to competition. The better the pugilist, the better Bam Bam will get down. With an late April's joke, on Bam Bam, there is no need to clown. Enough said! Holla!

**jzzy says:**

Rios has been protected and manuevered by Top Rank, he's not a top flight prospect, easily beaten by a tactician as Abril has shown. Marquez has no need to sully himself by getting involved in a Rios matchup.

**ultimoshogun says:**

I see it like Radam and Fe'Roz. I think Rios can absorb Marquez's best shots better than vice versa...Marquez may score the cleaner blows but I can see him getting rocked by Rios' bombs.

**Real Talk says:**

I agree with the article, Marquez by stoppage or UD. Too many arrows in the quiver. Skills pay the bills and Rios aint even half way up the hill but still couldn't swallow that pill. Get'cha weight up Rios and get some at 140, stop hiding at 35 beating up little dudes LOL. Dueces

**Real Talk says:**

guys

**riverside says:**

I agree with the article, different level of Boxing, Brandon Rios would get picked apart,Why would JMM stand in front of him, he would make Rios chase him all night long, pick him apart, take him to school, and KO his @SS. PacMan couldn't keep him down, Who would think Rios would KO JMM at 140, I could see Rios knocking JMM down, that would bring the best out of Dynamita, Let make it happen..

**Shoulder Roll Defense says:**

Marquez by UD. A slick boxer/counter puncher with a great chin beats a one dimensional fighter like Rios 9 times out of 10.

**Radam G says:**

Rios has too much energy and youth for a slick old-arse "boxer/counter puncher with a great chin." You musta fo'got how "one dimensional fighter[s] like Rios" were whuppin' da slick old-arse of slick boxing/countering, strong-chinned Sugar Ray Robinson back long, long ago in da day.

Same syet, different players. How soon do the aged always fudging fo'get dat you do not dominate forever, especially the energy of youth. The reason that human age is that old farts like Marquez hallucinate that they can go on forever and that they have not ever lost. Holla!