

Borges: Floyd Had To Work Hard On Saturday

Written by Ron Borges
Monday, 07 May 2012 08:51



Smiles abound above, on Justin Bieber, L'il Wayne, Floyd, 50 Cent and Yuriorkis Gamboa, but Team Mayweather wore some worried looks before the decision was announced in Las Vegas on Saturday night.

LAS VEGAS – You wonder sometimes about those post-midnight training sessions and pre-dawn runs up Fifth Avenue or down the Las Vegas Strip but for once there was no doubting the efficacy of Floyd Mayweather, Jr.'s unique approach to preparing for a fight because it was during one of those post-midnight interludes that he found the punch that would save him against Miguel Cotto.

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Mayweather fought his way to a surprisingly difficult unanimous decision over WBA junior middleweight champion Miguel Cotto at the jam-packed MGM Grand Garden Arena Saturday night primarily on the strength of a punch seldom in use these days, one whose effectiveness against Cotto he discovered by watching a late-night replay of Cotto's own difficult night with Shane Mosley several years ago.

"The right hook and the uppercut was working tonight," a bloodied and bruised Mayweather said early Sunday morning, more than an hour after the decision had been rendered. "I don't watch tape or any of that but the other night I was up watching television and I saw a few rounds of Mosley's fight with Cotto. He was using the right hook and I said, 'That's the punch I'm going to use.'

"I knew the right hook was going to be my money shot. A lot of times these days you don't see fighters using the right hook, only the left. But tonight I wanted to use the right hook and that is what I did. I remembered Zab Judah using the uppercut against him, too. So I knew I was going to use those shots tonight."

Mayweather (43-0, 26 KO) used both to maximum effect late in what was a far closer fight than the three judges at ringside seemed to see. One gave Mayweather 10 of the 12 rounds, a point of view so difficult to fathom it left newly crowned WBA welterweight champion Paulie Malignaggi, a long-time Mayweather advocate, bemused.

"What those scores said was beyond getting paid (an \$8 million guarantee) Cotto wasted his time coming to Las Vegas," Malignaggi said. "The scores tell you they weren't going to let him win a decision.

"That's the problem with this sport. You don't get what you deserve. Floyd won but show me 10 rounds Cotto lost. Come on."

Opinion on the outcome was widely split, some at ringside believing Mayweather won easily while a few had Cotto winning and the majority sided with Mayweather but by a far closer margin than 118-110 or 117-111 ones the three Las Vegas officials saw.

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Whatever end of that debate you might be on, Mayweather made clear that Cotto had been a far different experience from what he expected or from what his previous 42 ring encounters had offered him. By the fight's midpoint his nose was bloodied and his mouth was sliced open, blood leaking onto his normally brilliant smile.

He was breathing heavily and his entourage wore the kind of worried expressions that come with the sight of a gravy train pulling out of the station without them on it.

"Normally I come up on this podium with no bumps, no bruises," the undefeated but now dented Mayweather said. "Tonight I got a few bumps and bruises. This was a grueling fight.

"Cotto shocked me. He was slow but awkward. He won some rounds. He dished out some punishment but he took more punishment than he dished out. I could have stayed on the outside all night and won easy but I was going for the knockout."

By midway through the fight, Mayweather's obsession with leaving Cotto broken and semi-conscious had left him sitting on his stool with his nose bleeding and his mouth cut. That image was shown on in-house Jumbotron screens and the sold out crowd of 16,047 that had paid \$11,999,096 to witness just such a scrap as he was now enduring roared.

Earlier in the evening Mayweather had been smiling and shaking his head from side to side when hit solidly as if to imply those punches had been a mirage. But after he'd been mugged a few times by an opponent who refused to relent to Mayweather's hard right hooks, left uppercuts and quick counter shots, the smile disappeared.

"I had to fight hard and suck it up," Mayweather admitted. "Cotto is no push over. He's a tough competitor. He came to fight. Not just to survive. He came to fight. I dug down and fought him back."

Mayweather certainly did that in the fight's final rounds, coming out in round 11 and particularly

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Round 12 like a desperate man well aware that the night had not gone as planned.

As the final round began it appeared it might be either man's fight and Mayweather came out intent on making clear which that was. He nailed Cotto with a quick combination and then a second and stunned him halfway through the round with a big left hand and a right behind it that stopped Cotto in his tracks.

Mayweather spun away and when Cotto came forward he nailed him twice more. Those final punches failed to dissuade Cotto however, who continued to bore in relentlessly, like a fist full of termites.

"The judges said I lost," the normally gracious Cotto (37-3, 30 KO) said outside his locker room before refusing to attend the post-fight press conference for the first time in his career.

"I can't do anything else. I have to take my defeat. I brought my best tonight. He knows the kind of fight Miguel Cotto brings and so do the fans. I'm happy with my performance and so is my family. I can't ask for anything else."

Neither could Mayweather, whose claim of having avoided an easy victory in pursuit of a knockout seemed questionable. Much of his problem was caused by Cotto and very likely by the passage of time as well. He is nearly 36 years old now, a time when reflexes begin to argue when asked to respond too quickly and when the agility necessary to spin out of harm's way a moment before being trapped in a corner or against the ropes begins to desert you.

When asked why he had not pursued Cotto more diligently after seeming to hurt him in that final round if a knockout was his goal, Mayweather's response was both a wise and telling one.

"I sensed that sometimes Miguel was breaking down and then he would come back sharp," Mayweather said with admiration. "Miguel Cotto is in shape. Anybody who wants to get in with Cotto better be ready. He deserved to fight me."

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He also deserved better from those judges. He did not do quite enough to deserve to leave the MGM a winner but that's the story of Las Vegas. Other than Floyd Mayweather, Jr., most people leave there a loser. But Mayweather conceded Saturday night was really not that kind of predictable night.

"He pushed me to the limits and that is what it's all about," Mayweather said. "It's about winning and that's what I did. I'm not going to fold to pressure but Cotto can keep his head high. We were both winners tonight in our own way."

As the sycophants who surround Floyd Mayweather, Jr., holding his coat and taking his money, might holler on command, "True that!"

[Comment on this article](#)

michaelabii says:

I saw a different fight - similar to the way Ricky hatton was pushing Floyd a few years back although Cottos strategy was more intelligent which is not surprising since Cotto is a far more superior Boxer than Hatton. In reality though Cotto was not landing flush on Mayweather in a consistent manner. His jab was really what caused mayweather problems. Cotto has a good strong jab which he fires straight and fast - its really a punch. Thats what caused teh nose bleeds for Mayweather. People seem surprised that Mayweather got busted up a bit ! Thats what happens in a real fight ! He proved again that he has the superior stamina and ring intelligence to beat anyone in the game. Truth be told the Cotto he fought was much better than the Cotto of old.

deepwater says:

floyd won 7 rounds to 5. very good scrap. cotto layed out the blueprint. floyd retires after this. floyd got worked over more in this fight then in the last decade added up. good fight,close fight.

deepwater says:

if the fight was in the garden who woulda got the nod? draw or cotto win if it was at the garden

the Roast says:

[QUOTE=deepwater;16040]floyd won 7 rounds to 5. very good scrap. cotto layed out the blueprint. floyd retires after this. floyd got worked over more in this fight then in the last decade added up. good fight,close fight.[/QUOTE]

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I agree deep, good fight, close fight. You gave Floyd 7 rounds and I gave him 9. Not that different.

MisterLee says:

I also think Compubox didn't count much of Cotto's body attacks, and his small hooks, jabs, and uppercuts inside. All good. The system, the HBO crew, and many viewers are biased. imo. I had Cotto winning 7 or 8 rounds to 5 or 4 for May. Cotto pushed him on the ropes, and when Floyd tried to push his way back to the center of the ring he was wrestled and pushed and sometimes thrown/grappled back there.

MisterLee says:

I agree with Deepwater!

Real Talk says:

Good article, honesty is a rare commodity these days and always appreciated even if it's brutal. I wonder if Floyd would've jaded more or got back on the jab after he ripped his shots what would've happened? The body work by Cotto definitely paid dividends but in the center of the ring Cotto had little chance except for that jab which to me is the best in boxing right now excluding none. I wanted to see if Floyd could out jab Cotto. 2 rds into the fight it looked like Miguel was going to sleep until he landed a hard jab that buzzed Floyd. My man Ricky-C said he thinks Floyd did enough to win the fight but it could've been a draw. I said I don't think Floyd did enough to take the strap from the champ and it could've been a draw or decision Cotto. I'm looking forward to watching the fight this weekend to get my final say. I wonder if this is going to be like Leonard vs. Hagler where every time you watch itit looks different. One time it looks like Hagler won the next Leonard. Respect to both fighters for giving us one for the ages. I say let's do it again. Dueces

Real Talk says:

[QUOTE=MisterLee;16060]I also think Compubox didn't count much of Cotto's body attacks, and his small hooks, jabs, and uppercuts inside. All good. The system, the HBO crew, and many viewers are biased. imo. I had Cotto winning 7 or 8 rounds to 5 or 4 for May. Cotto pushed him on the ropes, and when Floyd tried to push his way back to the center of the ring he was wrestled and pushed and sometimes thrown/grappled back there.[/QUOTE]

I agree Misterlee, the compubox seemed rigged and it didn't look like Cotto was getting credit for those shots. Dueces

Real Talk says:

[QUOTE=michaelabii;16034]I saw a different fight - similar to the way Ricky hatton was pushing Floyd a few years back although Cottos strategy was more intelligent which is not surprising since Cotto is a far more superior Boxer than Hatton. In reality though Cotto was not landing

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I agree

Radam G says:

I don't agree. Reality distortion has no power over aging. "Truth be told the Cotto [that Money May fought] was" an older, more experience, smarter Cotto. The Cotto of old -- young-arse Miguel -- was wild, reckless, lazy, fought with his wife and uncle all the time and didn't train properly. He was always getting knocked down and knocked around even at light welterweight. Holla at the dvds.

I will just say that this older Cotto is a better Cotto -- the BEST! That is how it is for some fighters. For example, way, way back in da day, the older Jack Johnson was better than the young one and became the oldest man to win the heavyweight title of the world at 30 years old in 1908. The older [Rev.] George Foreman was the BEST over the young one and became the oldest dude to win a world title back in da day. The older Archie Moore was the best and became the oldest dude to win the 175lbs world title belt at an official age of 36 years old -- a true age of 39 years old. The older Jersey Joe Walcott was the best over the young one and became the oldest man to win a title belt in the 1950s. The older "School Boy" Bobby Chacon was the best over the young one and became the oldest small man to win a title in the early 1980s. The list goes on and on. Holla!

the Roast says:

Bobby Chacon....respect...vs Boza Edwards and Bazooka Limon....great stuff....I'm throwing in these dot dot dot's for DP69....where did he go?....back to the slammer?....if ya don't know....now ya know....

puncher says:

Cotto showed that he is one of the best in the world. He took it to Mayweather who to me is the best in the world. Those judges where watching another fight because there were only two rounds that Mayweather showed to be dominant (2,12) while there three that Cotto was dominant (3,7 and 8). The rest could have gone either way, but most of the rounds Cotto thru more punches, connected (despite what Compu Box tells us) and was applying pressure!

In a nutshell I had Mayweather winning the fight thanks to the last round. Shame on the judges for their poor score cards and for those out there that are claiming for a May-Pac fight you should all be claiming for a Cotto - May rematch or a Cotto-Pac. Those are the best fights available!

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