

NO LOSER Figueroa and Arakawa in Fight of the Year Candidate

Written by Michael Woods
Saturday, 27 July 2013 21:44



Weslaco, Texas' Omar Figueroa battled Nihito Arakawa in a 135 pound scrap at the AT & T Center in San Antonio, and on Showtime, and this one exceeded expectations immensely. The pace was hectic from the start to the final, fabulous round, and I don't think it fair to announce the winner, as both men deserves ample praise for their effort, which was Herculean.

This one should get Fight of the Year honors, and after twelve rounds, the judges, by scores of 118-108, 118-108, 119-107, gave Figueroa the nod.

No, those wide scores don't begin to tell the tale of the scrap, which was a classic. Yes, Arakawa took a count in the second and sixth, but he almost deserved a draw for his wall to wall balls and heart.

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Arakawa spoke to Jim Gray after. He said that Figueroa was "very strong."

"Thank you very much, Texas, San Antonio," he yelled to close. If he didn't become one of your favorites after his effort, and humble decency displayed by that shoutout, then he should've.

Figueroa (landing on the Japanese fighter in above Tom Casino-Showtime photo) said after he knew it would be twelve hard rounds. He said it was "incredible" the amount of punishment the "loser" took. The victor said he hurt his hands in the second or third round. He didn't say anything til later, because his corner noticed he wasn't as busy. "I've looked forward to a fight like this," he said. He said he didn't think it would go much past the second round, when he put Arakawa down. He gave the belt he won to his dad.

Fig, age 23, was 150 on fight night, while the Japanese boxer, age 31, was 151 on Saturday in Texas. Fig entered with a 21-0 mark and the underdog was 24-2-1. The WBC interim world title was up for grabs.

The first round was busy as all hell. The lefty Arakawa got hurt and took a knee in round two. Figgie, switching his stance, worked to the body. Arakawa didn't get on his bike, or grapple. He stood in the pocket, and banged, God bless him. A right to the top of the head buckled him, on replay.

In the third, Arakawa had Fig on the ropes, and was scoring well to the body. Fig scored well up top, with both hands, and he took the last part of the round. Blood, from a head clash, showed on Fig's nose to start the fourth. The round was a stellar showing from both men. Ara out-threw 110 to 66 for the Texan.

In the fifth, a sharp right landed and buzzed Arakawa a tiny bit. But he didn't back up, not even a half step. It was another round of wall to wall action, hard to score.

In the sixth, Arakawa took a count, with 30 seconds to go. The ropes kept him from going down,

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the ref ruled, correctly. A right hand on the button started the damage combo.

In the seventh, blood flowed from the bridge of Fig's nose. He went lefty, then righty again. Arakawa held twice and one wondered if he was losing steam. But he kept on hurling as did Figueroa.

In the eighth, time was called for a lowblow by Arakawa, and he was warned for the second time. Fig's right landed a few times to the midway point. Arakawa's left eye was puffed and he was tired.

In the ninth, Arakawa rebounded some. But in the last minute, he ate clean shots and looked weakened again. The only thing moving was hands, as both men stayed in the pocket, and launched. Fig looked fresh in the corner, for having been so busy to that point.

In round ten, it was the same, toe to toe. Fig said he was having hand problems after the round. In the 11th, he still threw with both mitts. Arakawa did some damage, with the Texan on the topes, at 1:30. They traded and the crowd roared down the stretch.

In the 12th, Arakawa had Fig on the ropes, a few rounds after folks on Twitter were calling for his corner to pull the plug.

This was a classic, people.

Fig went 480-942 to 280-1170 for the loser.

the Roast says:

I looked up the word 'insane' in the dictionary and there was a picture of this fight. I never heard of Arakawa before this but after watching him keep coming forward for twelve rounds I have mad respect for him. I will be worried that when I wake up tomorrow I will read that Arakawa is in a coma. He took hellacious amounts of punishment. Too much heart for his own good. No way that fight doesn't leave him with permanent damage. Figueroa is exciting but I think he will

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get taken out by a bigger puncher than he faced tonight. Wild fight.

amayseng says:

I agree Roast I don't think Arakawa won even if they gave him the nod. He was constantly throwing busy arm punches while Omar was ripping and thrashing him with devastating hooks from his whole body. Mad respect for Arakawa I just hope he didn't suffer any serious damage.

brownsugar says:

My grandson groans when I kick him off the videogame or cartoon network on the main TV...but he doesn't complain to much because he knows I need the best view in the house on FightNight Saturdays...

The gripping action of last nights fights was so intense we were both utterly enthralled from the opening bell.

"Watch this skinny kid...this baby faced nerdy looking...soft looking guy will transform into a Demon as soon as the bell is rung".....I told him before the fight as Figueroa was awaiting the opening bell.

"What manner or sorcery is this grampa?" Said my highly sarcastic grandson..." this guy looks like he's still in high school and he doesn't have no muscles" ... I ignored the double negative and said "just watch".

Midway through the nonstop whirlwind of back-and-forth activity we wondered if this would be the round the brave Arakawa's fighting spirit would finally be extinguished....but it was not to be...then we wondered if Figueroa could possibly sustain the level of energy necessary to fight back another 6 rounds?.

During the ebb and flow of horrific action my grandson compared the fight to a battle between Fajita and Goku...we waited intently for Figueroa to charge up the KameHame Ha and blast Arakawa into the next dimension.. Apparently Arakawa had no intention of going anywhere..and hung on till the endlike Roast said..I doubt this guy will ever be the same again. I hope was paid well. Both men have my thanks for an incredible performance.

Shoulder Roll Defense says:

The biggest thing I take away from this fight is that Figueroa is a younger version of Antonio Demarco. Long and rangy with good "pop," but no defense. If Arakawa had power, Figueroa would have been put to sleep. Terrance Crawford would give him a unforgettable boxing lesson and the same could be said for Ricky Burns. A 135 pound Broner knocks him out cold. Needless to say, I wasn't impressed by Figueroa.

Carmine Cas says:

Arakawa is a true warrior but too much for his own good. I wasn't impressed by Figueroa either, he looks like he can box from the outside but instead he elects to go toe-to-toe. Anyone with power will hurt him, the kid has heart though, well they both do lol. However going through the

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@Carmen...lol... somewhere my memory of Vegeta got crossed with my love for Mexican food.

amayseng says:

SRD Omar can bang. Don't be disappointed in him he had a kamikaze fighter in front of him all night. But I agree he lacks boxing tools at this point.

He needs to learn defense and to fight off the jab when needed. Footwork and spacing as well. Till then he will continue to be exciting.

Plus, he's a baseball player I gotta stick behind him. Ha.

brownsugar says:

I don't know how far he goes but its always a pleasure to see him on any undercard. I had forgotten his name but remembered his face and knew instantly the fight would be worth watching.

Whenever Figueroa appears on a card.. riveting action is sure to follow....like watching a young James Kirkland....Jim Lampley should give him the Gatti award.

the Roast says:

I don't see Figueroa going too far. No defense, took way too many shots. I kept wondering why he didn't pivot off the ropes and jab. Get some space between himself and his hard charging foe. The last two rounds most of all because they were reporting Figueroa's hands were bothering him. Use your legs next time kid. Create some space. I'm very glad (and surprised) that I didn't read this morning that Arakawa was in a coma. I hope both fighters are ok.

Carmine Cas says:

[QUOTE=brownsugar;34221]@Carmen...lol... somewhere my memory of Vegeta got crossed with my love for Mexican food.[/QUOTE]

Fair fair lol but now you messing with me "Carmen" lol