

Felix Sturm Blasts Darren Barker

Written by Phil Woolever
Sunday, 08 December 2013 16:21



BACK – Felix Sturm defied the critics who'd said his career was finished, producing one of the strongest performances in his long career atop the rankings to capture the IBF middleweight belt with a convincing TKO over Darren Barker at 2:09 of the second round.

Inside Stuttgart's sold out Porsche Arena, amidst a landscape where many high performance automobiles are forged, Sturm proved he still has plenty left in the tank.

The 34 year old Sturm, now 39-3-2 (18), came out faster than usual, firing short, straight shots with increased pressure that led to Barker's undoing and made Sturm Germany's first boxer to win four world titles.

How much of Sturm's uncharacteristic aggression had to do with Barker's fragile hips isn't clear. What is clear is that Sturm was ready and able to do the job he needed to do.

The impressive win sets up some potential blockbusters, including a unification match against Gennady Golovkin. Sturm would realistically be less of an underdog versus Triple G than many of those critics might presume, and at least a fair bet against Martinez or Chavez.

"I'm ready to travel. I may be fighting next in England, or it could be the United States," mused an energized Sturm, who sported a pair of bright welts on his face but kept a big smile.

For 31 year old Barker, 26-2 (16) it may be just the opposite, as the re-occurring hip problems could cause a completely unexpected retirement. Results of hospital testing were unavailable at post time.

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Replays indicate Barker suffered the injury, apparently to his right hip area, during a close, fast paced first round in which each man landed solid early shots.

For few frantic moments, the bout looked like a Fight of the Year candidate as each man scored well inside. Sturm shrugged off a couple big shots, while Barker seemed to feel the leather landing more than his hyper-motivated challenger did.

After further exchanges in round two, Sturm scored with some damaging right hand hammers to Barker's temple area. Maybe Barker's equilibrium went around the same time as his hip.

A thudding right dropped Barker to his knees. With hindsight, it appears he further aggravated the hip injury at that point as he began to wobble away from a hard- charging Sturm.

Barker made a futile final stand with looping whaps that Sturm ignored before firing back with precision counter punches that seriously stunned Barker and dumped him again.

As Barker rose, he signaled to his corner that his right hip was gone. When Sturm resumed his attack, trainer Tony Sims recognized the inevitable and threw in the towel, just as it looked like referee Mark Nelson was ready to jump in.

The building went wild in celebration, except for dozens of visiting Barker supporters, including Joe Calzaghe and Carl Froch.

Barker's corner deflated while Sturm's danced elated.

"It was a great fight while it lasted, and I'm looking forward to another one in London," said Sturm, citing an immediate rematch clause. "I wish Darren the best for his recovery. We will all just have to wait and see what happens, but he deserves another chance. I want to thank all the

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English fans who came and supported this fight.”

Whatever the profit margins, as a career move, Sturm’s quick enticement to lure Barker to the very friendly confines of Stuttgart paid off enormously for Sturm’s fighting future and his boxing legacy.

Sturm’s surprising win might have even re-opened the possibility of a mega-match with national alpha celebrity rival Arthur Abraham. Another of the show’s enticements, Ran.de TV’s Andrea Kaiser, deserves special mention for providing insightful conversations with many of the events principals.

“We never took Sturm lightly,” said Sims, still shaken by his charge’s potentially career ending injury. “Sturm looked great at the weigh-in. We expected him to come out faster than usual because he had so much on the line. Not to take anything away from Felix, because he’s a great champion, but it’s just very unfortunate the way it happened. After two operations we thought the problem was over but now it looks like they’re (both hips) completely gone. ”

Sturm’s alliance with iconic German trainer Fritz Sdunek, who has also extended Vitali Klitschko’s performance range, seems to be paying substantial dividends since they teamed up three years ago.

Add Sturm’s successful promotional company to the squared ring equation and it’s not hard to argue that he’s one of the global game’s senior statesmen, despite criticism for remaining almost exclusively in Germany.

As for Sturm’s next move, visiting the States or UK for more than an extended vacation seems a bad move in terms of Sturm’s prospects for success, especially if he’s looking at a younger foe like Peter Quillin.

Unless his payday makes a potential debacle worthwhile, which is unlikely outside Germany, Sturm should go all in and make his case for all time greatness.

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Sturm might not be able to beat Golovkin, but whatever the result, for at least a little while, he'd give the monster a little bit of a boxing lesson.

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brownsugar says:

Saturday was truly the "Black Friday" of upsets.

Sorry for to hear that Barker may have to forfeit his career to a persistent hip injury.

Now that Surms has redeemed himself there should be no further reason to deny GGG a shot.

Or Sturms can take a shot at the he middleweight king.

My guess is Sturm's will sit on the title for a while and defend against a Ronald Hearn's type opponent.

Prove me wrong.

Bernie Campbell says:

Land your feet on the ground boys! Mansour has an old behind! hes even more ancient than dirt! Why you wasting time with kelvin Price? Sose he can fight Klitschko in the next several years, put his bottom in NOW with Julius Long! What kind of charade is his people playing with this man's career?

Bernie Campbell says:

Barker had hip replacement surgery since his last fight! But I still say Felix the cat slaps Golokvin down silly! The boxing public demands we see this fight come about! Dude is too wiley!

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[QUOTE=Editor Mike;40980]BACK – Felix Sturm defied the critics who'd said his career was finished, producing one of the strongest performances in his long career atop the rankings to

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From what I've seen of the replay Sturm has nothing to offer GGG in the way of meaningful resistance ... At least not much more than GGG's previous challengers. Easy work. GGG snacks on boxers like Sturm like a snicker bar between meals..and I doubt Sturm makes any substantial plans to facilitate the bout. Already there are plans for Sturm to defend against a no hoper to padd out his reign.

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The Shadow says:

Julius Long?????? HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA, you're one funny frisco!

amayseng says:

Just watched the fight, what a HORRIBLE stoppage that was. Barker was throwing punches and fighting not only back but starting the exchanges even after the knock downs, Sturm wasnt landing anything clean where you would say stop the fight so Barker doesnt get hurt.

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What the Hell

anyone else see it??

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Sturm has no head movement just stands upright with minimally flexed knees and trunk and absorbs punches on his gloves like a statue.

GGG would have no problem

GGG may not have the resume to be top lb for lb but it will take a special fighter to beat him, not an ordinary or even a good a great fighter, a special fighter...