

Erik Morales A Winner, Even Though He Loses To Maidana...WOODS

Written by Michael Woods

Saturday, 09 April 2011 23:18

Folks hoped that future Hall of Famer Erik Morales wouldn't get beat up too badly against Argentine Marcos Maidana in their clash at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas on Saturday night. The PPV attraction was seen by many pundits as an unseemly setup, with those people feeling the Mexican legend Morales, at 34, but older in boxing years, was too far past his prime for a young hammerfist like Maidana (29-2 entering; coming off UD12 loss to Amir Khan).

But when the Mexican got to the middle rounds, and landed some sharp combos, even with his right eye nearly totally shut, everyone had to admit that Morales deserved props, and an apology. No, he wasn't a sad shell of himself, and in fact, gave Maidana all he could handle, most of the time doing it with one eye closed. After twelve rounds, the decision was in the judges hands, but all watching had Morales a winner in their book. Michael Buffer announced the scores as 114-114, 116-112, 116-112, for Maidana.

It was the right call, sentiment aside, in my eyes.

Morales (51-6 entering; first title won in 1997) was off for 2 1/2 years after losing to David Diaz, but had won three in a row on the comeback route.

Maidana came out banging. Morales' right eye began swelling. He did better in the second, for awhile, but did get caught on the ropes. Morales slipped pretty well, but what if that eye got worse? In the third, the eye was nearly fully closed. Morales landed a few clean shots, but his power wasn't going to bother the stronger man.

That we even got to the fourth round was a pleasant surprise for many. The crowd didn't like Maidana's cheap tactic when he rubbed his head on Morales' bad eye. Why didn't he go extra heavy on left hooks instead? In the fifth, Morales conjured a flurry and the crowd loved it. He had Maidana backing up a few times, and the crowd really got into the possibility of an upset. In the sixth, Maidana again used his head as a weapon. He should've won the round but maybe gave it away with his cheesy tactics.

In the seventh, that Morales eye was still closed 90%. But he still had more good time in the round than he had any right to. His defense was spot on, as he slipped like a man ten years younger, and this was another close round. In round eight, he wobbled Maidana, who got his head together and got some good work done. In the ninth, Maidana poured it on. After looking to be in precarious straits, a minute in, he had Maidana, who by now was simply arm punching quite often, backing up. That said, the Argentine was the busier boxer in this frame. In round ten, Morales looked as fresh as the younger man. Fresher, actually. In the 11th, Maidana started strong, then Morales gave him the business. Overall, Maidana told the judges the round

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was his with volume. In the 12th, Maidana came out looking to work against a pretty weary Morales. We'd go to the cards.

Check back for David Avila's ringside report.

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Radam G says:

The pugilistic legend Erik M is no doubt a winner. He got on his oldschool boxing and made dat New Jack boxing chump look like a beginner. The bout could have easily been called a draw. Young lion, Maidana ain't! He's more like a man of straw. Holla!