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Hogan Photos

They, we, questioned his heart.

No more.

The heart question is no more for Victor Ortiz. He said no mas in June 2009 against Marcos Maidana, but he was all heart, and muscle, and grit, against Andre Berto in the main event at Foxwoods in Connecticut on Saturday night. Both men hit the canvas multiple times, both went to the mat in a memorable sixth round, but it was Ortiz, exhibiting a palpable hunger, who told the judges that he wanted Berto's crown, and wanted that no mas to be erased.

The scores were 115-110, 114-112, and 114-111 for Ortiz, the new WBC welterweight champion. Stat-wise, Berto went 147-480, to 281-696 for Ortiz. Berto went 115-251 in the power department, to 266-570 for Ortiz, who looked better than good in his 147 pound debut.

After, Ortiz said he didn't feel 100% on this night, surprisingly. He was asked by Larry Merchant if he wanted to fight Manny Pacquiao. Ortiz said yes, and said he'd talked to Manny, who told him he had the good to beat Berto. The loser said after to Merchant that he didn't underestimate Ortiz, "he was just the better man."

In the first, Berto started out throwing power. The lefty Ortiz threw a left and knocked Berto down, but it was called a push. It should have counted. He went down for real with a minute to go, off a flurry. He basically took a knee, to get his head. Berto then landed a big right. But Ortiz

was looking to stop it now. Berto escaped the round.

In the second, Ortiz came out nasty again. He was in torpedo mode, all the way. His straight left was landing. Then Berto got busy; a right counter in close dropped Ortiz. His glove touched the canvas with 20 seconds to go in round two. Two rounds, three times these two had been on the floor.

In the third, Berto was buzzed by Ortiz. He was wobbly with 1:40 left. Ortiz had mustard on every single thing he threw. Could he keep it up?

In the fourth, Ortiz again wobbled Berto's legs at the 1:20. His legs simply were not on sturdy ground. He needed to move, steer clear of the Ortiz power, but his legs weren't in that mode. He was on the ropes way too much.

In the fifth, Berto was on the ropes, eating, with 1:25 left. He wasn't keeping Ortiz off with a jab, or using his legs to lessen the punishment he was taking. Not great strategy, but also, Ortiz was a beast on this night.

In the sixth, Berto had better luck. In the center of the ring, he was landing first. He dropped Ortiz, off a right, with a minute left. His eyes looked OK. Berto landed clean, mean shots, and Ortiz ran. A left from Ortiz then dropped Berto at the very end of the round, as ref Mike Ortega looked to see if he should stop it. This was your round of the year, folks, Foreman-Lyle circa 2011.

In round seven, Berto smiled as the bell clanged to start it. He was smiling, but stumbling, towards the end. This was more mellow round, as fatigue hit both men.

In round eight, fatigue was again in play. Ortiz' power was on the wane, it looked like.

In the ninth, it was a tight round. In round ten, the ref took a point from Ortiz for hitting behind the head. I didn't agree with that call. Berto's legs were weak. And Ortiz was fighting like a man possessed.

In the 11th, Berto was maybe on his last legs. He looked at his corner, at the clock...

In the 12th, Berto looked for a KO finish. But he didn't get that done. We'd go to the cards.

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SPEEDBAG Steward said after Ortiz is a star. He said also that Ortiz could prove a problem for either Manny Pacquiao or Floyd Mayweather. Agree or disagree, fight fans?

--Merchant said in his wrapup that it was a joy to see Ortiz change his life.

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