

Decision Harms Williams More Than Lara If He Doesn't Make Changes...LOTIERZO

Written by Frank Lotierzo
Monday, 11 July 2011 18:58



This past weekend marked the return of former welterweight/junior middleweight title holder Paul Williams 40-2 (28). The last time boxing fans saw Williams in the ring he was catching a crushing over-hand left from middleweight title holder Sergio Martinez that left him face down on the canvas for the count. Well, it appears that Williams' last opponent Erislandy Lara 15-1-1 (10) did his homework and studied the tape of Martinez-Williams because Lara couldn't miss Williams with his left hand regardless of the variation in which he threw it. Williams, who is nearly 6'2" with a 78 inch reach, (the same as former light heavyweight/heavyweight champ Michael Spinks) fights as a swarmer and constantly crowds his opponent. But due to his height and low guard, Williams' head is usually vulnerable and wide open for his opponents overhand and looping lefts on the way in and often even while he's inside.

Williams-Lara went the 12-round distance and when it was over - Judges Don Givens 116-114 and Hilton Whitaker II 115-114 both favored Williams and Al Bennett scored it even at 114-114. Since the fight there has been outrage over the decision, and as of this writing I haven't heard of a single person who watched the fight that thought Paul deserved the decision or won the fight. During the HBO broadcast it was said by Harold Lederman and Bob Papa that Williams won no more than three rounds, which is something I totally disagree with. Giving Williams the benefit of the doubt, a case could be made that he won five rounds, but four is probably the more realistic number. The bottom line is, Erislandy Lara clearly won the fight and the wrong man had his hand raised when it was over. And believe it or not, Williams is more of a victim by winning the decision than Lara is by getting hosed out of it.

Prior to the fight Williams said he wanted to beat Lara and then fight a rubber match with Martinez and retire, with his wish being that he could accomplish this and retire at age 30. However, after seeing him in the ring against Lara, he's not ready for Martinez yet. Against Lara, Williams had no timing, no balance and at times looked as if he didn't have a clue on how to get out of the way or redirect Lara's lead and overhand lefts. Actually, Paul's reflexes looked shot Saturday night and all that he can do is press forward and try to bang away with his right

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hook to the head and body. His accuracy was really off and he rushed his punches and combinations against Lara, who for all intents and purpose fought a pretty vanilla fight, but stuck to the plan and didn't make any mistakes or try to be somebody he isn't.

Lara may have been set back by the decision going against him, but I doubt it'll amount to being anything more than losing the zero that accompanied his record in the loss column before the fight. He'll get another high profile bout and a chance to show that he's worthy of boxing fans to keep their eye on. As for Williams, winning a decision that he didn't deserve will keep him in boxing that much longer, which will translate into taking more big shots and perhaps getting knocked out again. I hope I'm wrong, but I don't think that'll be the case.

That is unless Paul Williams makes some drastic changes.

For starters Paul needs a new trainer. George Peterson hasn't done a thing to improve Williams as a fighter. He's been the beneficiary of Paul's immense talent and toughness. Based on the way Paul fought against Lara and Martinez both times, it's painfully obvious that he's working with a trainer who can't give him even the most rudimentary advice. Williams is too skilled and talented to waste his natural physical gifts, which is what he's been doing the last year or so if not longer. Not to mention that he gives away his height and reach willingly, and chooses to fight a style that cuts careers in half being that he's a swarmer. You saw the listlessness and diminished reflexes that were on display versus Lara.

Granted, Lara is a very good fighter and is fundamentally sound, but he should've never bettered Williams for at least seven of the 12-rounds the fight went. Had it not been for Paul's toughness and volume punching, he would've been run out of the ring. At this time Williams looks like he could be at the end of his career and at a definite crossroads. But I don't want to write him off yet because he could become a major force again if he makes the needed change regarding his corner. I hate when fighters blame their trainers after a loss or two. However, if anyone can look at Paul Williams and determine he's getting the most out of his ability, I question whether or not you know what you're watching when he fights. Hopefully, it's not too late for him and he'll do what's best for him as a professional fighter.

Paul Williams is a very tough and determined fighter. He won't go away easily, and the decision win over Lara will become the devil in disguise because it will keep him in the ring and making the same technical mistakes. In time he'll eventually con himself into thinking that he really won the fight and is still the fighter he was when he beat Antonio Margarito and Winky Wright. Sadly, those days are gone forever unless he brings in a trainer who can get the best out of him and cause him to stop relying on his toughness. I respect his loyalty to George Peterson, the only problem is nobody is hitting George and the sand running through Williams' career hour glass is waning rapidly. He must make a change and upgrade his trainer because his career and health are depending on it.

I'm one who wholeheartedly believes the fighter makes the trainer and still stand by that. But in the case of Paul Williams, he's not working with a top-tier trainer and needs that little bit in the form of adjustments that the top trainers bring.

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DaveB says:

Williams approach is the definition of insanity. He sure is one bullheaded young man.

Radam G says:

Long Tall Paul oughta just shut the heck up and RETIRE! What a pathetic HYPE! Anytime a fighter misses 85 to 90 percent of his punches, he is a chump who is badly mistrained and mistaught. Has anybody told the dude about feinting, walking an opponent into the punches and balance? I think NOT. New HYPED Martinez would kayo him again. Matter of fact, Kemit Crinton would kayo LTP if they ever tangle again. I think that LTP is seriously SOS -- stuck on STUPID! His luck is running out. Pretty soon so will his ability to make a BUCK. Holla!

the Roast says:

BS decision or not we all know whats up. Lara won the fight. LTP is heading for another KO loss. Sergio is licking his chops.

riverside says:

I watched the fight for first time last night, After watching the Rios fight on saturday i forgot about hbo after dark! williams clearly lost the bout, it seemed like there was a magnet on LTP face and lara fist had the steel to attract them together. LOL.. Lara couln't miss even if LTP was 7 feet high...LOL

Radam G says:

New Jersey Commission stepped up and suspended all of the SOS -- Stuck on Stupid -- judges. WTF! Bunch of fake muthasuckers. The NJC should cut out the bullspit and charade and go OLD SCHOOL and declare the bout a NO CONTEST. That would be real justice and fairness. Cut out the New Jack jive of show-acting suspending the bum-arsh judges. Don't pay them, then you will be making a REAL path to process. Holla!

Radam G says:

The REAL harm to boksing is that the powers that be won't use their REAL power. They can easily declared the bout a no contest. Holla!