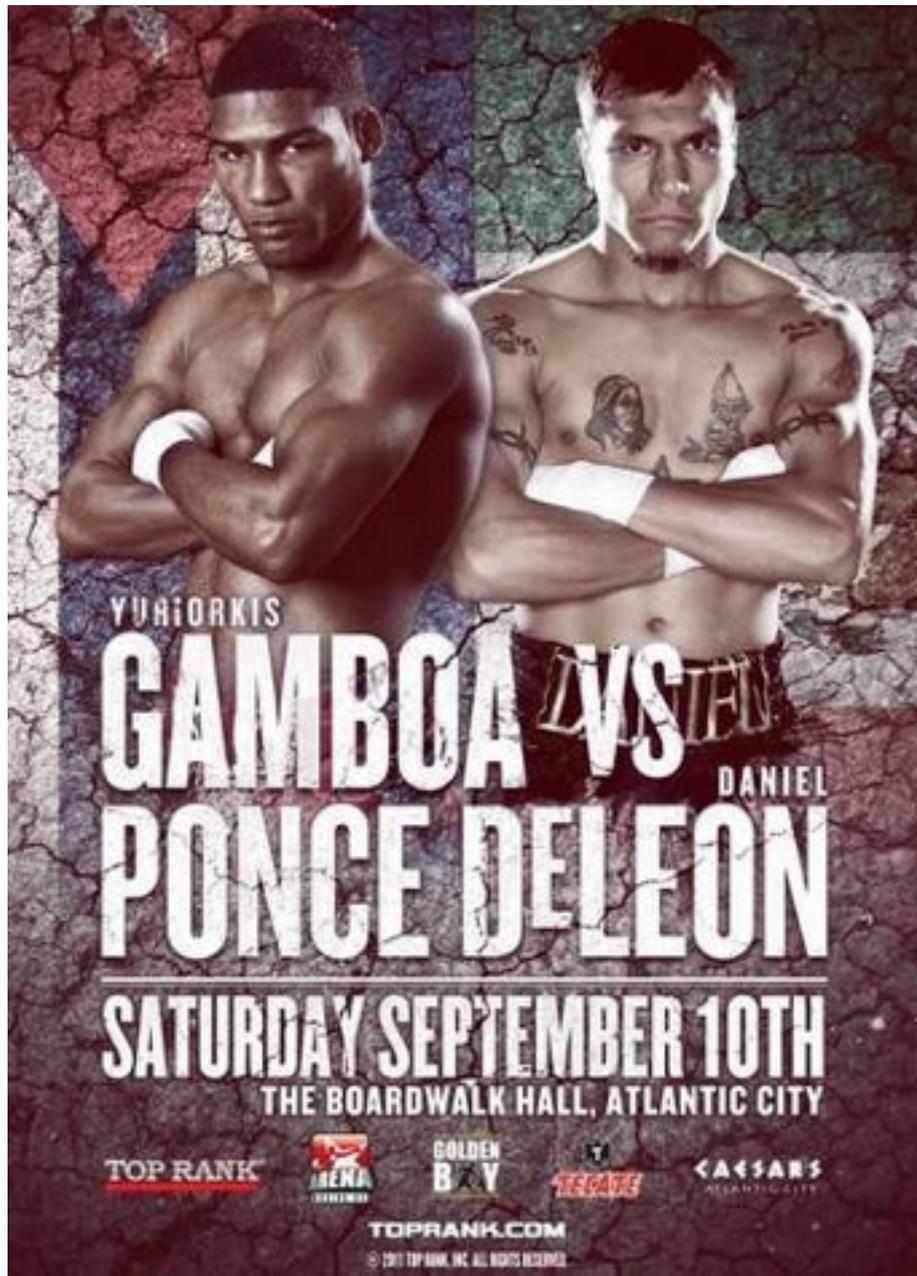


Gamboa Scores Technical UD Over Ponce in AC...WOODS

Written by Michael Woods

Saturday, 10 September 2011 23:06



Things started out promisingly enough for Ponce De Leon in the main event which unfolded at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City on Saturday night. In the first round, his skill set looked to match up well with flashy Cuban defector Yuriorkis Gamboa. Then Gamboa got loose, got into a rhythm, and pulled away from the Mexican. Gamboa came in an 8-to-1 favorite and lived up to it, as he used his quicker hands, feet and powerful, accurate launches to impress the judges.

The fight came to disappointing end, when a clash of heads in the eighth opened a nasty gash on Ponce's left eye. The fight was halted at 1:24, and we went to the cards, with no drama. The scores were 70-63, 70-63, 69-64, for the speedy power puncher, Gamboa.

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The victor won the stat war, 116-379 to 91-360. After, Gamboa told Max Kellerman, who said he didn't look as sensational as we'd seen before, that he wanted to extend the fight, because he thought Ponce would be dangerous early. Max said he thought that was strange, if indeed he wanted a super fight next. Gamboa said Manny Pacquiao is in his sights, because there are no challengers in his weight class. Kellerman named Mikey Garcia and Gary Russell Jr. Gamboa said if they think they are one of the best, he's game.

Gamboa wants to be in the pound for pound mix. While he is an ace pugilist, he'll need to pick off a couple top tier names to get into the top five; and in some eyes, he's not even in the top ten. There is a perception that he is less than the sum of his parts, that he sometimes coasts, instead of maximizing his considerable arsenal.

Gamboa (ex featherweight champion; age 29; 20-0 with 18 KOs entering; 2004 Olympic gold medalist; from Cuba, now lives in Miami) weighed 127, 138 on fight night, while Ponce (from Mexico; ex 122 pound champ; age 31; 41-3 with 34 KOs entering; coming off controversial loss to Adrian Broner) was 127 at the weigh in, 137 pounds on fight night.

Jim Lampley called the action on HBO with Manny Steward and Max Kellerman. Steward said Ponce needed a KO to win, before the action kicked off.

Allan Huggins was the ref.

In the first, the lefty Ponce came out banging. Gamboa was more measured, as his jab was half hearted most of the first. After the round, Gamboa's trainer told him to keep his rhythm, and if he did so, he'd win easily.

In the second, Gamboa pressured to start. He ate a straight left, and really, Ponce didn't look out of his element at all. Gamboa used his feet more, and fought with more pep in this round.

In the third, Gamboa's left hook, fast and hard, scored. He started to make Ponce miss noticeably at times. The underdog Ponce was now backing up more than before.

In the fourth, Gamboa went lefty, and ripped four shots off on Ponce. He switched back, but it was clear he was in another zone confidence-wise. Gamboa drew a warning from the ref for cuffing Ponce off a break. There was no need for this transgression; he was getting things into his control, and didn't need to digress. This can be a problem with Gamboa. He loses focus. No real wonder, he's fought over 300 times, amateur and pro. He can do it in his sleep, and at times, does.

In the fifth, a hard right counter wobbled Ponce. The Mexican got a launch in soon after. He wasn't going to disintegrate, despite Gamboa's speed and power edge. That said, his long left was usually short, as Gamboa saw it coming, and slithered backwards. Gamboa's side to side movement kept Ponce of balance for most of the round.

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In the sixth, as he typically does, Gamboa used the jab mostly to keep the other guy at bay. That's no knock, he knows what he's doing, and is comfortable and effective with the power-punching style. He is so accurate, and so quick, that his foe can see the punch coming, and still not slip it. The Ponce crew told their man to "press a little bit more" after the round.

In the seventh, Gamboa wowed the crowd with a left hook thrown as Ponce lunged toward him. A left hook-right follow hit home, hard, soon after. Ponce for the second time stood still and gestured for Gamboa to come to him, and mix it up.

In the eighth, a hard clash of heads opened a cut on Ponce's left eye. The ref called for a break and the doctor looked at it. He didn't like what he saw and recommended a halt.