

The King of Khan

Written by Kelsey McCarson
Tuesday, 17 July 2012 09:44



When Danny "Swift" Garcia stopped Amir "King" Khan at 2:28 of round number four on Saturday night, his life changed forever. No more the undefeated but unknown titlist whose best win to date was over the aging Erik Morales in a nip and tuck affair for a title belt Morales was practically handed by the WBC in the first place, Garcia now has to be considered one of the best fighters in the world.

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Let that sink in.

It was a spectacular win for the 24-year-old WBA, WBC and Ring Magazine junior welterweight champion. It appeared from the onset that he would be outclassed by the sharpshooting Khan, but a perfectly timed left hook changed everything in the blink of an eye.

It was that devastating punch in the third round that took the steam out of Khan's fists and made his legs too rubbery to be effective. Garcia followed it up to his advantage to send his opponent back down to the canvas twice more in the next round before referee Kenny Bayless determined Khan had suffered enough.

It was an absurdly impressive performance for a fighter who, although being young and undefeated, had yet to really move the needle for pretty much anyone outside Garcia's immediate family. That has most assuredly changed now.

Danny Garcia is a likeable sort. He's humble but confident, and he puts up with the antics of his father in a way that befits unassuming nice guys everywhere who know their embarrassing family member is off their rocker but loves them anyways. He's just one of those guys who's easy to like.

More importantly, though, he's damn good fighter.

Garcia isn't remarkable at anything really, but he's solid at what counts most. When Khan was peppering him with fast and furious shots in the first two rounds of the fight and even caused a cut over Garcia's right eye in the second, he remained poised and ready to strike. Garcia remained calm under the intense pressure and showed focus where others might panic.

Khan was darting in and out with nary a consequence early on in the fight. At times, he was making Garcia look slow and borderline amateurish. So much so, in fact, that when the good natured Garcia came out of his corner in the third to pat gloves with his opponent in a gesture of sportsmanship, HBO analyst Max Kellerman opined on the psychology of what it could mean. Surely, Max reasoned, Garcia was beginning to concede that he was being bested by the

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better man, right?

Wrong.

Garcia kept punching when it seemed like things were not going his way. He did it the way a sweet scientist should do it, too. He didn't just abandon his game plan and start trying to hit homeruns with every punch. He didn't forego the subtleties of timing and placement. He used a measured and calm approach that'd make any pugilist proud.

Even when he had Khan stumbling around punch drunk and ready to go in the third and fourth rounds, he kept enough composure to avoid the brave fighter's return fire. Meanwhile, Garcia kept sending back punishing potshots until his foe could take no more.

In another one of the apt Kellerman's soliloquies Saturday, he talked about how maybe Amir Khan was too old school for his own good. Basically, he argued that Khan was the busy type of fight-anybody-anywhere-boxer fight fans used to see during boxing's golden era.

Maybe Max is right. Khan has been the kind of fighter (at least inside the ring) that fans can really get behind. He fights tough fights and doesn't seem interested in "gimme wins" like less noble competitors of the trade. Boxing needs more guys like that.

There is something old school about Danny Garcia, too.

He doesn't have that athletic flair we've come to expect from boxers these days. He isn't blindingly fast. His foot speed is made even less exceptional by his apparent lack of hand speed. He's got decent power but no one will confuse him with Joe Louis anytime soon. His defense is decent, but he eats too many punches per round to be considered anything more than average.

Simply put, Danny Garcia is no phenom. In fact, there is seemingly nothing at all that is really

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that impressive about him except that he keeps winning.

Garcia stays true to the fundamentals of the sport, though. When he sees openings to punch, he does so with vigor and enthusiasm, and he never gives up. It's likeable, it's commendable and it's the oldest trick in the book: fight brave and smart.

Danny Garcia isn't a superstar. He doesn't have any big time endorsement deals, and a report from the arena last night suggested the crowd at Mandalay Bay was something like 90% in favor of the fighter from across the pond.

But Danny Garcia is a legit force in the sport now. He blasted out in four rounds a fighter who many (including the fighter himself) had proclaimed the king of the junior welterweight division. In fact, before the fight Khan's people were insinuating a date with pound-for-pound kingpin Floyd Mayweather, Jr. was on the horizon for their guy next, but the only fighter to leave the ring in Vegas with the possibility of anything like that was the undefeated (and no longer unheralded) junior welterweight champion of the world, Danny Garcia.

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deepwater says:

danny garcia is not one of the best in the world(yet,lets see him in more fights)khan was not pound for pound. old morales would of killed garcia and went out and do an 8 ball with the ringcard girls. match garcia against zab or maidana. if he wins those fights you might have a point

dino da vinci says:

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Khan was most definitely on the short list of pound for pound candidates. There are approximately 20,000 professional fighters. After you get past the Bros. K, Money, Pac, JMM, Sergio, Andre, Donaire and a couple of others, it would have been impossible not to mention him.

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no way top 10 dino. maybe top 20 near 20.of the top of my head all the guys you just mentioned, I agree plus kessler ,froch,dawson,marquez,bradley maidana,adamek,haye,cotto,mosley(but mosley is done now) i would put garcia around bundrage,chavez jr,

deepwater says:

If garcia beats another top 20 guy like zab or alexander then he moves up. Beating old morales was good, but that was not anywhere near the real morales. he gets props for taking khans shots and countering with the hook. It looked like he was about to really get beat up by khan but he did nice work by hanging in there so he gets all the credit for that. But those 2 wins cant put him in top 10 yet. does canelo get top 10 for beating up mosley and baldomir?

dino da vinci says:

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If you back the clock up, before Haye won earlier the same evening, his stock was a bit low. I'll give you mid-teens. But hey, we're talking monster territory. You're considered one of the best 20 fighters in all of KO-land, that's a pretty impressive accomplishment. And deep, I did mention Marquez, right after Pac.

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oh my bad about marquez. peter quillen ,pirog, and golvekin are around 20 and might be top 10 this year or next. I would put them near garcia. who knows ,if garcia adds another good scalp to his resume he would . khan should of sorted these things out after getting starched by prescott. he should of known better against garcia and roach shoulda kept him cool with garcias dads insults. I would like to see garcia vs zab in atlantic city. If garcia clips zab then he moves up, Zab is a live fighter as he proved against the detroit kid. how bout maidana or alexander for garcia. either way garcia gets his props for hanging in there and backing up his words. Khan is

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going to fire roach and make a comeback I would bet.

the Roast says:

Dino and Deepwater, I like how you are having a reasonable discussion here. Not calling anyone a "Tom" or and other crazy crap. We need more of that around here. I'd like to see Garcia in with Zab or Maidana. Let's see some more.

dino da vinci says:

I've never said anything in print I wouldn't repeat to the person's face.

Also, you'll find people coming on the internet acting like they're Al Capone (Chicago reference for you, Roast) but would melt if you walked into the same room with them while they were typing. Go on youtube. It's like the world has become one great, big trailer park. There are no more real men left, the Roast.

Speaking of which, I'm going to do my best Sean Parker impression and recommend dropping the 'the'.

Since I'm in recommending mode, hasn't that girl in the photo suffered long enough? Let her retain some dignity. Time for a more upbeat, happy, shiny tennis star.

deepwater says:

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Hey thanks roast. I respect dino and agree with him a lot sometimes we disagree but it's nice to debate with you guys on here because a lot of you guys know the game . Hey get in shape roast and do the masters tournament.