

RINGSIDE REPORT Martyniouk Wins in Sacramento

Written by Joel Stern
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On Saturday night at the Red Lion Hotel in Sacramento, CA., Stan “the Man” Martyniouk, 13-1, defeated veteran David Rodela, 16-9-3, via an 8 round unanimous decision. The win was Martyniouk’s biggest of his career as he looks to climb the ranks to national prominence under the tutelage of his trainer, Virgil Hunter. The non-televvised card, locally promoted by Uppercut Promotions and ominously titled Rage VI War, also featured wins from local action fighter Guy Robb and ShoBox alum Roman Morales, in addition to fights from various local pros and amateurs.

Boxing in his hometown, Martinyouk, 137 pounds, fought for the first time as a full-fledged lightweight after a career as a super featherweight. He faced Rodela, 136, who is best known to the boxing public for working for years as one of Manny Pacquiao’s main sparring partners. This fight represented something of a crossroads fight, or maybe just a stepping stone fight, as Rodela was coming off KO losses to Jorge Linares and Terence Crawford and Martyniouk, whose career as been stalled by non management, an unexpected loss and a recent rib cartilage injury, needed to start the climb at 28 years old.

One thing that Martyniouk has is speed of hand and foot. One thing that Rodela has learned to deal with during his time with Manny is speed. With only two KO’s in his career, Martyniouk is no hard hitter. Rodela can bring the pressure. The style match up for a compelling fight was set as was the motivation for each man to come away victorious.

Martyniouk, in red shorts, began the fight working behind his lightening jab, circling in either

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direction and mixing in left hooks (often doubling them to the head, then the body or to the body, and then the head) and throwing the occasional multi punch combination to the head. Rodela, in camo trunks, was looking to take away the speed by banging to the body, right then left. By the end of the second, Rodela was starting to close the gap, though Martyniouk took the first two with his jab and activity.

Rodela had his best round in the third. He was able to cut off the ring, work hard to the body on the inside and following up with left and right hooks to the head.

Rodela slowed his punch output in the fourth. Martyniouk continued to work his jab, circling and throwing the occasional flurry to the head. From the corner, Virgil Hunter started to call for Martyniouk to work the body.

The fifth began with more jabbing and circling before both started to throw hard to the body. Rodela started to mix in uppercuts and landed a hard left hook. Martyniouk began to hold and hug on the inside. Virgil yelled for Martyniouk to work on the inside and go to the body instead of holding. Perhaps Hunter knew his fighter, whose body was a weight class heavier than before with muscle, could swim in waters he previously avoided.

The rest of the fight was Martyniouk's. Hunter implored Martyniouk to hold his ground in the center of the ring. Working jabs, flurries and body shots Martyniouk forced Rodela to spend much of his time blocking while walking forward instead of punching. Martyniouk could then spin off and reset. Both parties neutralized most of each other's offense and neither could land many clean shots. Martyniouk's activity and his jab took the rounds even if Rodela never wavered in his pressure. In the seventh, Hunter implored Martyniouk to go new levels.

Martyniouk passed this test winning 78-74, 80-72, and 77-75 on the judges' scorecards. Stan the Man has rock solid technique to go with his speed. He doesn't leave himself open when throwing, even when throwing in combination. He uses his feet to evade, but doesn't sacrifice balance in the process. His conditioning never failed him in the eight rounds. Despite a few moments in the mid rounds, he was able to maintain consistent focus.

Working with a world-class trainer, Virgil Hunter, amongst a world-class stable of fighters (Andre Berto, Brandon Gonzales and Mike Dallas, Jr. were on hand to support him), Martyniouk is

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ready to step up. The questions of how he will deal with harder hitting, more skillful opponents will be left for another day and the whims of the boxing business.

As for David Rodela, he may be set from here as a classic stepping stone, but one who fights with pretty big stones of his own.

The co-feature saw a Sacramento favorite, super bantamweight Guy Robb, 12-1, continue his education in the concept of the shortest distance to a chin is in a straight line. Robb stopped late sub Roberto Ventura of Tobasco, Mexico early in the third.

The beauty of a local event is the ability of family and friends of the fighters to participate in the show. Robb entered the ring to the sounds of Tupac's 'California Love' walking through a gauntlet of friends that spread the length of the conference center's floor. His friends then followed in behind Robb and congregated on the side of the ring as Robb ascended the steps into the ring.

Robb's opponent backed up from the start. Robb looked to land big right hooks and overhand rights while his opponent threw hard punches with intentions to keep Robb away, but not with the intention to actually land them. By the end of the second Robb found a home for the big looping rights forcing Ventura to trade hooks. At the very end of the round Robb landed a straight cross driving Ventura against the ropes as the bell rang.

Robb started the third with jabs, then a left uppercut from outside, followed by a left hook and then a straight cross began the finishing assault that caused the referee to step in and stop the fight before the danger that Ventura was became realized. When asked about his win, Robb stated that if he had thrown the straight cross earlier, instead of throwing bombs, maybe, he could have ended it in the first.

Featherweight Roman Morales, 16-0 of San Ardo, Ca., KO'd Lorenzo Trejo, 33-27-1, of Sonora, Mexico, two minutes into first round with a hard one-two that landed on left side of Trejo's forehead just in front of the temple. Run full-speed into a steel pole, then empathize with Trejo.

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In other action, Sacramento junior welterweight Will Walters, 1-3, won his first pro fight against Sacramento's Andre Kim, 4-4. Sacramentan Mike Guy, 6-1-1, beat Jose Alvarez, 3-2, of Sanger, Ca. In an unfortunate spectacle, forty-five year old heavyweight Bomani, 14-8, Parker, a former amateur superstar a generation ago, was blasted out in the first round by 6-8-3 Yohan Banks' double jab, straight right hand.

The card began with four amateur bouts, a practice that should be encouraged at any local shows. Local amateurs are given the opportunity to fight under the lights, with ring walk music, in front of a big crowd. Gym mates can see the pros fight. Family and friends buy tickets. Fight fans can see from where the sport grows. Young men and women who cannot afford to fight in trunks and boxing shoes, who box in wife-beaters, gym shorts and sneakers, are given the opportunity to fight with everything they have and walk out of the ring victorious the same way the headlining professionals do.

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