

Herrera's Pesky-Aggressive Style Made Garcia Look Ordinary

Written by Frank Lotierzo

Monday, 17 March 2014 09:35



This past weekend junior welterweight title holder Danny Garcia 28-0 (16) successfully defended his WBA/WBC belts against Mauricio Herrera 20-4 (7) in Bayamon, Puerto Rico. After 12 very close and difficult rounds to score, Garcia won a majority decision by the scores of 116-112 twice and 114-114. It was an extremely close fight and neither fighter was ever close to going down or being in trouble, but it was Herrera who fought his fight and had Garcia trying to solve his difficult style, something he never did.

I scored the fight 115-113 Herrera and agree with commentator Paulie Malinaggi who said it's a shame that two of the judges who scored it 116-112 for Garcia missed the fight that was happening right in front of them. Speaking of Malinaggi, he is as good or better than any commentator in boxing. He not only sees everything quickly, but cogently explains the whys and why-nots without trying to sound like a know it all, even though he's as close to being one that there is among current boxing commentators.

Danny Garcia likes to say that he's Philly-tough and possesses Puerto Rican power. That's a cute soundbite.. and it's mostly true. Danny's also a very fundamentally sound boxer and technician, but at heart he likes to rumble and fight. What separates him from other fighters with that mindset is he's very versatile and is content to out-box an overly aggressive opponent. And what he found out against Herrera is Mauricio doesn't fit into any category and is a nightmare to fight.

There was talk right after the bout that perhaps Garcia looked less than par against Herrera because he was coming off a 182 day layoff. I say don't believe it, Garcia could fight Herrera 10 times at 140 or 147 and never look good against him.

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For 12 rounds Herrera had Garcia guessing and trying to find something that worked. When Herrera carried the fight to him and took the lead, Garcia was always a punch late and off the mark. And when he tried to push the fight and dictate the tempo, he was nailed on the way in and never really answered back enough to offset what landed on him cleanly as he initiated the exchange.

He never could time Herrera and was uncomfortable fighting as the attacker as well. During the bout Malignaggi kept referring to Herrera as being pesky with his style and attack, which was very profound. As we saw, Herrera, by not looking for the knockout really had Garcia befuddled. Garcia is used to after being hit flush, having his opponent look to continue the barrage for the finish, but not Herrera. Mauricio wouldn't be baited into the big exchanges that Danny was trying to ignite. It looked as if Garcia was at times willing to eat a couple punches just so he could get Herrera to fight and trade with him but he never could lure him into the brawl he needed to really get off good. For a majority of the fight Garcia was mostly wrong on every punch that he anticipated coming at him, causing him to get hit with leads and counters like we've never seen before in his career. Because of his natural style, Herrera actually took the bullets out of Garcia's gun's by virtually causing him to have to think and pause while he was determining what to throw and when to throw it - and during those lapses he was peppered by Herrera's jabs to the head and body.

Garcia is a tough guy who is very comfortable when he's facing a rough and tumble opponent who is trying to knock his head off, and he's fine with carrying the fight to them or engaging them if they bring it to him. However, Herrera only tried to hit and touch him. He fully grasped that Garcia is very tough and durable and there was no way he was going to win by knockout; plus, add to that he's not much of a puncher himself, and he stymied Garcia by just connecting cleanly and then making him miss with his counters.

Herrera's only significant punch is his jab, but he throws it constantly, upstairs and down, then clinches. His movement is very jerky, and he's impossible to predict. He's physically stronger than he looks and wasn't manhandled at all by Garcia, although he has absolutely no power.

Herrera being cognizant of his lack of punching power has him knowing that a knockout is out of the equation, thus all he has to concern himself with is unsettling his opponent. So he keeps those jabs coming in from all kinds of angles, then he ties up. He'll make anyone look horrible. When the fight was over Garcia had the look of a fighter who didn't think he got beat up, but the look of a guy who knew the other guy probably got the better of it. He spoke in generalities

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during the post fight interview because he couldn't be specific, knowing he never solved Herrera's passive-aggressive style because nothing he tried worked for long.

Sure, he had successes and got the better of the fight in spurts, but once Herrera felt it was enough, he forced Garcia to either have to chase him or move away and regroup trying to figure out his next move. Sustained offensive continuity is something Garcia never achieved. He came within centimeters a few times with some big left-hooks and right hands to Herrera's chin, but he never really caught him with anything consequential or close to resembling his best finishing punch.

Among his past seven wins before fighting Mauricio Herrera, Garcia owns decisions over Zab Judah, Kendall Holt, Nate Campbell, Erik Morales and Lucas Matthisse, as well as stoppage victories over Morales and former titleholder Amir Khan. Six of those seven fights were against fighters who held a title at one time and Garcia fought as though he was the favorite instead of the underdog in everyone of them. In fact you can say with impunity that Garcia won all seven of those bouts convincingly. He was a big favorite against Herrera and wasn't very impressive but that doesn't mean he was exposed because he wasn't. Everyone who knows anything about boxing knows that styles make fights. Mauricio Herrera is an awkward and unconventional fighter, and those guys really bother fighters who are fundamental and do most things via the book. This is something the late great Alexis Arguello often attested to after his two wars with Aaron Pryor.

Danny Garcia had an off night against Mauricio Herrera, but Herrera had a lot to do with that and if they fought again he'd probably look no better than ordinary in that fight too. If anything surfaced during the bout that we didn't know before it's the fact that Danny Garcia is not comfortable fighting a guy who isn't trying to kill him. Being hit by clean punches that really do nothing more than knock him out of position to counter bother him more than the bombs that Lucas Matthisse threw at him or the darts that Erik Morales and Amir Khan tried to outbox him with.

Lastly, Garcia's less than convincing performance against someone with little name recognition probably removed him from the Mayweather sweepstakes, at least for the time being.

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riverside says:

Thank you guy for the kind support!!, we took our A game implemented it, We knew it would be hard to come out with decision. Mauricio was very focussed during training, neutralized that hook, distance. I cold of swear those belts were coming home with us? kinda of heartbroken, back to the drawing board.

amayseng says:

You know what Riverside, 3 judges got it wrong but the rest of the world sees Mauricio as the victor.

He truly won that fight and has nothing to be ashamed about.

He truly beat Garcia up and gave him a veteran's boxing lesson, I was quite impressed with Mauricio.

Hoping a rematch can be made and those belts can be given to the rightful owner.

Keep us posted.

the Roast says:

That was yet another bad decision. Sorry your guy didn't get the verdict he deserved. I knew after they annoned the score after the fourth round that those judges weren't watching the same fight that I was.

gibola says:

As soon as the open scoring after four rounds was announced you knew Herrera was going to get jobbed. Congrats to Herrera on a great fight, he should be world champion now. Those judges should feel very guilty about robbing an honest fighter of his big break.

Carmine Cas says:

[QUOTE=riverside;45907]Thank you guy for the kind support!!, we took our A game implemented it, We knew it would be hard to come out with decision. Mauricio was very focussed during training, neutralized that hook, distance. I cold of swear those belts were coming home with us? kinda of heartbroken, back to the drawing board.[/QUOTE]

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Hey man,

You guys got nothing to be ashamed of, Mauricio looked awesome, and as stated previously the rest of the world knows who the real winner is, especially after seeing Angel nearly lose his sh*t after every round lol

kenhissner says:

There will be no Garcia Herrera rematch anymore than you saw a Garcia-Kahn rematch. Both were difficult fights. With Kahn it was who got to who first. With Herrera Garcia couldn't handle the hand speed of Herrera and got a gift decision. I had it 8-4 Herrera. Herrera should get the rematch or if Garcia moves up Herrera should be one of two fighting for vacant title.

Skibbz says:

[QUOTE=kenhissner;46554]There will be no Garcia Herrera rematch anymore than you saw a Garcia-Kahn rematch. Both were difficult fights. With Kahn it was who got to who first. With Herrera Garcia couldn't handle the hand speed of Herrera and got a gift decision. I had it 8-4 Herrera. Herrera should get the rematch or if Garcia moves up Herrera should be one of two fighting for vacant title.[/QUOTE]

I think a Garcia Khan rematch makes a lot of sense now especially at 147. Both guys are throwing their hooks out trying to land a Floyd fight, and they're both looking for a move up to 147. I think Khan would be much more vicious at 147, he'll have better resistance too and Danny hasn't looked perfect in his last few fights.. I do agree Herrera deserves to be fighting for a title again but unfortunately many fighters deserve a shot and a title fight isn't charity.. I really think if anyone can get a deal done between the two camps (HBO/Sho) to get Herrera involved it's Artie..