

Danny O'Connor To Stay Busy

Written by The Sweet Science
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FRAMINGHAM, Mass. (August 16, 2012) - No sooner had the dust cleared from last Sunday night's fight, light welterweight prospect **Danny O'Connor** (18-1, 6 KOs) was back in the gym preparing for his next action, September 29, on the non-televised segment of a *HBO BAD* tripleheader at MGM Grand Theater at Foxwoods in Mashantucket, Connecticut.

The 27-year-old O'Connor, a former two-time national amateur champion and 2008 U.S. Olympic Boxing Team alternate, stopped **Eddie "The Puerto Rican Sensation" Soto** (12-5, 4 KOs) this past Sunday evening in the fourth round of their fight, headlining the first professional boxing show in Gillette Stadium history. Boxing was preceded by a Major League Soccer match between the New England Revolution and Montreal Impact.

"I walked Soto down, everything behind my jab, and listened to what Coach Ronnie (Shields) told me," O'Connor said about his fight against Soto. "The name of the game for me is keeping active. I'm young, hungry and always in shape. Inactivity hurts fighters. I appreciate what's going on right now. I'm looking forward to my next fight and to keep improving."

O'Connor dropped Soto in the first round and again in the second. He was unloading on the Rhode Island fighter when the fight was mercifully halted by the referee. O'Connor was fighting in front of family, friends and fans from his home in nearby Framingham (MA). New England sports-and-entertainment "royalty" walked him into the ring: "**Irish**" **Micky Ward**, New England Patriots receiver

Julian Edelman

, Boston Bruins winger

Shawn Thornton

, former Bruins player

Lyndon Byers

and Danny's manager,

Kenny Casey

, lead singer and founder of the

Dropkick Murphys

band.

"Seeing and hearing all the people there supporting me, walked into the ring by those great athletes, it was exciting," O'Connor explained how he felt when he entered the ring. "I went into the ring with a game plan and had to contain my excitement so I could take care of business."

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Once the bell rang, I was fully focused."

O'Connor believes the unique cross-promotion, fusing soccer and boxing, was successful in terms of attracting new fans for both sports. "A lot of my fans told me they got there early to watch the soccer game and really enjoyed it," O'Connor noted. "I saw the reaction of soccer fans that stayed to watch their first fight. I think it was win-win for both sports. It was a great atmosphere, something very special for me."

O'Connor's chief second, former "Trainer of the Year" and two-time world title challenger **Ronnie Shields**

, gave his protégé a perfect 10 score. "Danny did a really great job against a strong kid," Shields commented on O'Connor's most recent fight. "I gave him 10 on a scale of 10. He got close to his opponent and then caught him. He let both hands go with an all-out assault that ended the fight. He was great from bell one, doing everything we worked on in the gym. This is a different Danny O'Connor. Most are familiar with Danny backing up, but he's been moving forward. That's the biggest difference in Danny the past year, plus he's sitting down more on his punches. You can't make a guy punch harder, but Danny had some power but didn't know it. He's never going to be a one-punch knockout guy, but it's the accumulation of his punches that do the damage. His connect rate is in the high eighties, low nineties, and when he throws combinations, a lot happens.

"Danny was always in a retreat mode, but we have him attacking. When he faces big, strong guys standing in front of him, he can go back to boxing. He will fight different ways depending on the style of his opponent. You're seeing more body punches, uppercuts and a lot more left hands from Danny. I want him to become a more complete fighter, not fighting one style, and that's what is happening with him."