

Boxing After Dark TV report

By Jereme Warneck

HBO Boxing After Dark Recap June 27, 2009 Staples Center-Los Angeles, California

This was originally going to be a 2 match card. The opener was going to be Chris John defending his 126-pound title against Rocky Juarez in a rematch of their controversial draw from February. However, John had to pull out of the match on June 21 due to an undisclosed blood disorder that was preventing him from training. John fainted after 3 rounds of sparring on June 20. The blood work done at the doctor's office showed the mysterious blood disorder. It is reportedly nothing serious. John had already passed his blood test for hepatitis, HIV and other serious blood diseases administered 2 weeks earlier by the California State Athletic Commission. This blood disorder is thought to be something along the lines of anemia. Juarez had the opportunity to stay on this card by facing a replacement opponent, Mario Santiago, but declined. Santiago boxes out of the southpaw stance, while John boxes out of the orthodox stance. Juarez said he could not adjust to a new opponent boxing out of the opposite stance on such short notice. This entire situation is a huge disappointment. This event has drawn a good crowd of 8,600, but probably would have drawn a few thousand more with the John-Juarez match on the card. Had Juarez faced Santiago the crowd would have likely grown by at least a few hundred. It also means, because of the limited amount of television dates Juarez is not going to be on HBO again this year.

Interim WBA Super Lightweight (140 pounds) 12-Round Championship Match: Marcos Maidana (25-1, 24 KO's, 140 pounds) vs. Victor Ortiz (24-1-1, 19 KO's, 139.75 pounds) This title is being created in this match for apparently no other reason than to generate more sanctioning fees. The actual WBA 140-pound title holder is Andreas Kotelnik. Kotelnik is not behind on mandatory title defenses, and is scheduled to make an optional defense of his title on July 18 against Amir Khan at the MEN Arena in Manchester, England. Maidana had a solid amateur boxing career that saw him win 2 national championships in his native Argentina. The Argentinean made his pro debut on June 12, 2004 by knocking out Adan Basilio Mironchik at 50 seconds of round 1 at the Club de Regatas in Corrientes, Argentina. Maidana would win 5 of his next 6 matches by first round knockout. The other match Maidana won by knockout in round 2. The only decision victory of Maidana's career was a 6-round unanimous decision victory over Daniel Benito Carriqueo on August 6, 2005 at Estadio Ruca Che in Neuquen, Argentina. That match was contested at a catch-weight of 151 pounds. That is 4.5 pounds heavier than any other match of Maidana's career. Maidana won every round of the match, but it was clearly too heavy a weight for him to maintain his power. Maidana's last match was a controversial 12-round split decision loss challenging Kotelnik for the full version of this title on February 7, 2009 at Stadthalle in Rostock, Germany. The deciding scorecard had Kotelnik winning by 1 point. Many impartial observers felt Maidana won decisively. The general feeling was that the German was able to retain the title based on his hometown advantage. Maidana is The Ring magazine's number 10 contender at 140 pounds to their champion in the weight class, Manny Pacquiao. Ortiz had a respectable amateur boxing career that peaked when he won the 2003 PAL Championship at 132 pounds. Golden Boy Promotions has gone on a recent spending spree to sign young prospects. The boxers that took Golden Boy Promotions to the top are out or almost out of the sport in Oscar De La Hoya, Bernard Hopkins and Shane Mosley. According to De La Hoya, the newly signed prospect with the best chance of carrying Golden Boy Promotions in the coming years is Ortiz. De La Hoya has said there is no more talented prospect in the sport of boxing. Ortiz was ESPN.com's 2008 Prospect of the Year. HBO is marketing Ortiz as a boxer set to become a breakout star this year. Ortiz has won his last 7 matches by knockout with 6 of those knockout coming in 5 rounds or less. Adding to Ortiz' marketability is that he has an outstanding personality and back story that makes him very endearing to fans. Ortiz was abandoned as a child by both parents before he had graduated junior high. Before the match, HBO showed a video of Ortiz talking finding out his mother had abandoned him after finishing an episode of Power Rangers. Listening to Ortiz tell the story is both sad and conveys the seemingly youthful enthusiasm that he brings to everything. Ortiz further demonstrated that youthful charisma by telling HBO he was excited to headline this event, because it was his first time headlining anything since singing "Old Christmas Tree" at a pageant in elementary school. Ortiz' last match was a technical knockout victory 1:27 into round 2 over Mike Arnaoutis on March 7, 2009 at the San Jose Arena (HP Pavilion) in San Jose, California. Arnaoutis was supposed to be a major challenge for Ortiz. However, the Garden City, Kansas native appeared to have an easy time with the Greek. It was the first knockout loss of Arnaoutis' career. After the match, the young Ortiz endeared himself to the audience by enthusiastically saying he was looking forward to going to Taco Bell. A full recap of that match can be found here: <http://www.number1contender.net/the-latest/2009/6/25/recap-of-victor-ortiz-vs-mike-arnaoutis.html> Ortiz is unranked by The Ring and the number 11 ranked boxer in the world at 140 pounds by boxrec.com. At 22-years old, Ortiz is 3 years younger than the 25-year-old Maidana. Ortiz has the height advantage standing 5' 9" tall, while Maidana stands 5' 7" tall. The resident of Southern California has the reach advantage with a 23" arm length measured from the armpit to the end of the fist, compared to Maidana's 22.5" arm length. Ortiz will be the heavier boxer in the ring having unofficially rehydrated to 152 pounds approaching match time. Maidana has only unofficially rehydrated to 149 pounds approaching match time. Both boxers are naturally right-handed, but only Maidana will box out of the orthodox stance. Ortiz will box out of the southpaw stance. The unified rules of boxing are in effect for this match. Two of the official judges keeping score of this match from ringside are from California and the other is from Puerto Rico. The referee is Raul Caiz, Sr. Harold Lederman will be keeping HBO's unofficial scorecard for this match. Ortiz is entering to a Michael Jackson remix. It has opened with "Beat It" and is transitioning to "Thriller". Ortiz is dedicating his ring walk to Jackson, who performed the final rehearsal of his life at the Staples Center on Wednesday. The boxing community is doing a lot to honor Jackson, more on that in the news and notes section below. With 1:19 to go in round 1, a counter right hook drops Maidana to his knees. That is only the second time Maidana has been knocked down in his professional boxing career. That was also a first round knockdown against Omar Leon. Maidana came back to win by knockout in that match. The Argentinean is up quickly and easily

answers the referee's 8-count. The action resumes with 1:09 to go in round 1. However, Maidana is still hurt when the action resumes. With 1:03 still to go in round 1, a counter right-hand puts Ortiz on his back. That is the second time Ortiz has been knocked down in his professional career. The other time Ortiz was sent to the canvas he too came back to score a knockout. Except Ortiz appears to be hurt very badly this time. The Californian is up at the count of 4, but his legs are gone. The action resumes with 51 seconds to go still in the opening round of the match. Both boxers have been knocked down in this round, but Ortiz is hurt much worse. Ortiz may not make it out of this round and needs to hold on to last out the round. The crowd is chanting "Victor, Victor" as both boxers are trading punches when the bell sounds to end round 1. That is the round of the year. Maidana takes an amazing round 1, 10-9. The dueling knockdowns cause Lederman to score round 1 even, 10-10. With 31 seconds to go in round 2, another counter right hook drops Maidana. Maidana is up quickly, but hurt much worse following this knockdown then he was following the first knockdown. Maidana is being allowed to continue with 18 seconds to go in round 2, but looks nearly done. With 6 seconds to go in round 2, for the third time in the match Maidana is dropped with a counter right hook. Maidana cannot be saved by the bell. The referee is going to apply a count. The Argentinean still badly hurt is up quickly and is going to be allowed to continue. The bell sounds to end the round before any more punches can be thrown. As the referee was applying the count to Maidana, De La Hoya was yelling at Ortiz and pointing at his head wanting the star prospect to be smart. Maidana has already shown in this match that he can be very dangerous, even when hurt. Ortiz came out to "Thriller" and is delivering a thriller. He wins round 2 big, 10-7. Every punch Ortiz landed in round 2 was a power punch. Neither boxer is jabbing in this match or doing much defensively. It is not very good technical boxing, but very entertaining. Lederman also scores round 2 for Ortiz, 10-7. Ortiz wins a slower round 3, meaning there were no knockdowns, 10-9. After 3 rounds, Ortiz leads on my scorecard, 29-26. Lederman scores round 3 for Ortiz, 10-9, and has him ahead after 3 rounds, 30-26. With 40 seconds to go in round 4, the 2 boxers have combined to land a total of 3 jabs in the entire match. At this point, there is also some swelling forming under the left eye of Maidana. There is also a small cut under the left eye of Maidana. Neither should play a factor in the match. Ortiz wins a round 4 that was full of holding, 10-9. Maidana wins round 4 on the Lederman scorecard, 10-9. With around 1 minute to go in round 5, Ortiz is cut above the right eyebrow and it is bad. Within seconds there is a trail of blood running down Ortiz' cheek. The referee is ruling that the cut was caused by a punch. On replay it is clear that Ortiz was cut by a left-hand from Maidana. Maidana lands some huge power punches to take round 5, 10-9. Lederman scores round 5 for Maidana, 10-9. With 2:33 to go in round 6, Ortiz stumbles to the mat from an accumulation of punches. Ortiz is hurt badly and may not be able to beat the count. Ortiz does beat the referee's count, but looks terrible. The Californian has developed a huge knot underneath his left eye. The swelling was caused by Maidana battering Ortiz with hard right hands in the last minute of round 5 and first 30 seconds of round 6. Ortiz' left eye is nearly swollen shut. the young boxer's corner threatened to stop the match in the corner after right 5 if their charge did not keep his guard up and defend himself better. They must be very close to stopping the match at this point. At the count of 8, the referee asked Ortiz if he wanted to continue and the boxer waved his hands as if to say no. With 2:25 to go in the round, the referee is halting the count and bringing Ortiz over to the doctor to have the ringside physician examine Ortiz' cut. The referee and doctor talked and decided to stop the match on the cut. Since the cut was caused by a punch, Maidana wins via technical knockout. The official outcome courtesy of Lupe Contreras is that at 46 seconds of round 6 the referee has called a stop to this contest under the advice of the ringside physician, due to a severe laceration over the right eye of Victor Ortiz caused by a legal blow making the winner by technical knockout and new interim WBA Super Lightweight Champion of the World, Marcos "El Chino" Maidana. The win moves Maidana to 26-1 with now 25 wins coming by way of knockout. The final punchstat numbers have Ortiz landing 66 of the 293 total punches he threw, for a 23% total connect percentage. Ortiz landed 74 of the 177 total punches he threw, for a very good 42% total connect percentage. The new champion said in his post match interview that he was going to rest for a while after this match. When asked for a preference of whether he wanted to face Khan or Kotelnik next, Maidana said he had no preference. The champion said he already knew who to box against Kotelnik and that Khan was really not that big a deal. Ortiz said in his post match interview that he felt the pressure of headlining and became over-aggressive to impress the crowd. The Californian said he boxed "very dumb". Maidana was very exciting in this match. The Ring elevated Maidana 2 spots to become their number 8 contender at 140 pounds following this victory. The Argentinean has a lot of punching power and excellent recovery skills. He also showed some tremendous flaws in this match. Maidana throws very wide punches at times and that allowed Ortiz to score 3 knockdowns with short counter right hooks. The new champion was dropped 3 times, but that is not a serious indictment on his ability to take a punch. Ortiz has elite power. That means Maidana is only likely to get in trouble with the very top power punchers at 140 pounds. Maidana is going to need a long rest after this match. In theory, being the interim champion should make Maidana the mandatory contender to the Khan-Kotelnik winner. However, the WBA is completely corrupt and can get more sanctioning fees by keeping the regular and interim titles apart to garner more sanctioning fees. Therefore, the Khan-Kotelnik winner has a mandatory defense against Dmitriy Salita next. After that they will probably get to make an optional defense and then have to face Maidana. That would be in the summer or fall of 2010. There are numerous potential big name opponents for Maidana to face at 140 pounds. Unfortunately for the Argentinean, he is going to have to face all of them in their hometowns to make the match possible. That means if Maidana wants to get paid well for title defenses, he is going to put himself in a position where he must win every match by knockout to keep the belt. Ortiz showed his youth and inexperience in this match. The young boxer probably could have won this match by using his boxing skills. Instead, Ortiz allowed the situation to overwhelm him and brawled with a hard hitting opponent. Ortiz is going to need a long time to recover from the damage he took in this match. He will probably be brought back against weaker competition on the undercard an HBO BAD event late in 2009. This performance probably means Ortiz will not challenge for a title until 2011. The extra time to mature could be good for the young prospect.

Round 1 of this match was the best round of boxing all year. HBO has no scheduled boxing events until August 22 and will likely add replays of this event in the coming months and at the end of the year. This a great match people should go out of their way to see.

News and Notes: This was a good weekend for Argentinean boxers. On Friday, Omar Narvaez knocked out Omar Soto in round 11 to retain his 112-pound title. That was Narvaez' sixteenth defense of that title. Narvaez has held that belt since July 2002 and with that defense nearly 7 years later set a new record for title defenses by a boxer from Argentina. Evander Holyfield's \$10 million house is about to be auctioned off by the bank, again. The bank threatened to foreclose on Holyfield's home in June of 2008, but the boxer was able to work out a deal that time. Holyfield is saying that he will again reach a settlement with the bank. However, Holyfield's track record for honesty is abysmal. Another bank is currently foreclosing on a \$216,000 property Holyfield owns in the Atlanta area. Last year Holyfield said he had plenty of money, but it was not "liquid". Holyfield is second only to Oscar De La Hoya in the amount of money his matches have made on PPV. However, over 20 years of purchasing illegal performance enhancing drugs and paying for at least 11 children can take a toll on a person's wallet. There were other hijinks this last week involving high-profile heavyweights. The WBA has announced that Ruslan Chagaev despite failing his physical prior to facing Nikolai Valuev for their heavyweight championship and being knocked out in dominating fashion by Wladimir Klitschko 3 weeks later remains their "champion in recess". Valuev is intending to ignore Chagaev and his people sent out a press release early last week that they had a deal in place to unify his title with Vitali Klitschko's heavyweight title. That was news to Klitschko who was not even in negotiations with Valuev' people. Apparently, Vitali told Valuev that they should have a match some day to unify their titles at tennis great Boris Becker's wedding last week. That spawned the press release. Vitali is only in negotiations with Cris Arreola and David Haye for a match in the fall. Arreola is the heavy favorite to get the match, because Haye was planning to make all of his money for facing either of the Klitschko brothers from the broadcast fees in the United Kingdom that Setanta Sports would pay. Since, Setanta Sports no longer exists, Haye has no way of generating money for a match with the Klitschkos. Haye is also not on the good side of the Klitschko brothers. When Haye dropped out of the match, HBO decided not to air the match and Showtime passed on the opportunity to broadcast the match. That put the match on ESPN Classic. ESPN Classic only paid expenses to televise Klitschko-Chagaev. That cost Wladimir who was going to get all of the money from HBO a substantial sum. Vitali has little interest in facing Valuev, because it would generate roughly the same revenue from television in the United States as Wladimir vs. Chagaev did. Alexander Povetkin who is the next mandatory contender to Wladimir Klitschko may have a new trainer. Teddy Atlas, who trained Michael Moorer to the heavyweight championship, is currently in Russia spending 2 weeks working with Povetkin on a trial basis. Atlas has not been training boxers for several years, but if Atlas likes working with the young Russian he will be the one cornering Povetkin against Klitschko. As Jeff Hamlin wrote in his excellent TNA iMPACT! recap, Michael Jackson was the most important performer of our generation and the boxing community did their best to honor him over the weekend. All of the boxers on the untelevised portion of this show entered to music by Michael Jackson. Prior to the event going live there was a 10-bell salute for Jackson. To do that for an entertainer who had no involvement in boxing is practically unprecedented. Olivier Lontchi who grew up in Cameroon had his entrance music changed for his match against Juan Manuel Lopez on Saturday to a Michael Jackson song. (Unfortunately, Lontchi like Ortiz was knocked out after entering the ring to a song by the multi-time Nobel Peace Prize finalist.) The DJ working that Latin Fury PPV that Lontchi was a part of was instructed to play as much Michael Jackson music as possible. Jackson's influence can be seen every week in pro-wrestling on SmackDown! as R. Truth wears 1 white glove to the ring when he wrestles. The world of video games is also working to honor "The King of Pop". For the game Battlefield Heroes EA is making 2 Michael Jackson themed costumes available as free downloads. The good guy characters can download white suits like Jackson wore in the video for the song "Smooth Criminal". (Smooth Criminal was also the basis for a terrible arcade game that had a great soundtrack which ended up costing me far too many quarters.) The bad guy characters get the obvious outfit, the black leather costume Jackson wore in the video for "Bad". Microsoft, who loathes to give anything away for free, has made the complete and unedited mini-movie music video for "Thriller" available for free download on XBOX Live. The greatest music video of all-time had previously been available for download for \$4. The way media has changed make it unlikely there will ever be an artist as influential throughout the world as Michael Jackson. The next recap will cover the ShoBox event from this same day featuring Arthur Abraham defending his 160-pound title against Mahir Oral.

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