Jaro’s short forever

Friday, 20 July 2012

Sonny Boy Jaro etched his name in boxing history on April 2 this year, when he manhandled Thai defending champion Pongsaklek Wonjongkam in six rounds to win the World Boxing Council (WBC) flyweight (112 pounds) championship. A huge underdog, Jaro surprisingly dominated Wonjongkam, repeatedly mopping the canvas with the Thai’s mug.

Before the Wonjongkam fight, Jaro was already contemplating retirement, having dropped two previous bids for the world light flyweight (108 pounds) diadem. The upset win over Wonjongkam literally injected life into Jaro’s moribund career.
Unfortunately, the resurrection lasted about as long as it takes to spell Sonny’s surname. On July 16, just three months after his ascension to the throne, Jaro was yanked off it by way of decision loss to Japanese Toshiyuki Igarashi.

Making his initial defense of the title in Saitama, Japan, Jaro dropped a close decision to former Olympian Igarashi. Igarashi, 16-1 with 10 knockouts, offered mobility, a decent jab and a busier work rate, but it was Jaro who clearly threw the harder punches. American Judge Luis Escalona scored the fight 116-112 for Jaro, but he was overturned by Judges David Mendoza and Kyung-Ha Shin, who turned in scores of 116-112 and 115-113, respectively, for Igarashi.

“Ang talo ko kay Igarashi ay balewala kasi alam ko ako ang panalo (My loss to Igarashi does not matter because I know I won),” Jaro told this writer.

While admitting that the style of the fleet-footed Igarashi gave him some problems, Jaro insisted that he could have taken him out. For the record, Jaro finished the bout virtually unmarked while Igarashi sported a nasty cut on his left eye.

Jaro has vowed to be more aggressive if a return bout comes into fruition. “Kailangan ko lang talaga sugurin ng sugurin at suntukin ng suntukin siya,” (I just need to keep on charging at him and throwing punches), said Jaro.

Jaro, 30, saw his record sink to 34-11 with 24 demolitions. Before losing to Igarashi, Jaro had been on a five-bout winning streak, all by knockout. Jaro entered pro boxing in September 2001 and won his first four fights before losing by technical knockout to countryman Jerry Lota in May 2002. Jaro received his first shot at a world title in September 2008, dropping a decision to then WBC light flyweight king Edgar Sosa of Mexico. Jaro dropped Sosa in round nine but still lost by unanimous decision. A year later, Jaro secured another shot at the world title but he was annihilated in one round by then WBA light fly king Giovani Segura of Mexico.

Following the loss to Igarashi, talks of Jaro archiving the gloves once again mushroomed. Jaro, however, made it clear that he intends to stay in the ring and pursue one last shot at ring glory.

“Alam ko may mga magagandang laban pang natitira para sa akin (I know there are still some good fights left for me),” he said. Jaro was the king of the flyweights for roughly three months. The time on the throne was short, but undeniably intoxicating. As far as the former champion is concerned, one good serving, no matter how brief, definitely deserves another.

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For comments, the writer can be reached at atty_eduardo @yahoo.com.