**Mando Ramos vs. Alexis Arguello**

**Title Bout II Arena**

**(fought with the board game tables and upcoming lightweight cards)**

A sellout crowd let out a roar when Mexican-American Armando Ramos made his way to the ring. Ramos' rabid fans had to be held back by security, as they struggled to tap Ramos on the shoulder or back as he walked past those who could reach him. Ramos, smiling and encouraging the crowd, clearly enjoyed the adulation.

However, although the majority of the crowd was pro-Ramos, the incredibly skilled and always respectful Alexis Arguello, had his very vocal supporter as well. The Nicaraguan star, a gentlemen in and out of the ring, did his ring walk as he did everything else: with economy and focus. Only after he was in the ring did Arguello acknowledge the crowd.

It seemed like an eternity before the bell rang for the first round. Boxing's finest, both past and present, entered the ring for well-deserved recognition. The ever-present George Foreman, all-action fighter Matthew Saad Muhammad and old timer Earnie Shavers were just a few of the stalwart warriors who took their applause and walked to the corner of both Ramos and Arguello, to offer them best wishes.

Finally, the ring cleared and Referee Bengy Esteves Jr. gave final instructions. The fighters returned to their corner and the bell rang for the start of the first round.

First Round Action:

Ramos moved so quickly toward Arguello that Alexis barely had time to finish making the sign of the cross, stand up and turn around before he was forced to block a winging right hand by Mando. Arguello moved to his left and tried to get to the center of the ring but Ramos crowded the Nicaraguan and bulled him into the far ropes. Ramos, eschewing accuracy in exchange for volume, let less with a barrage of punches, most of which were blocked by Arguello's gloves, arms and shoulders. Nevertheless, the Explosive Thin Man, emerged from the bombardment with redness showing on his rib cage, within the first minute of the fight.

Arguello managed to get some distance between Ramos and himself as a crescendo of "Ramos! Ramos! Ramos!" urged Mando on. Arguello, unhurt took control of the middle of the round by using a sticking jab and moving to keep Ramos from getting inside.

With less than 30 seconds to go in Round One, both fighters launched vicious right hands. Ramos' arrived first and Arguello found himself in a very unfamiliar position, sitting on the canvas, with a count being sounded over him. Arguello made it to a knee at the count of 5 and wisely took another 3-4 seconds springing to his feet as Esteves shouted '9'.

If everyone in the arena thought that Arguello was going to move or clinch until the bell, they were about to witness a surprise. Arguello, a deadly serious look on his face, instead stood toe-to-toe with Ramos, raking the Mexican-American with short jolting shots.

Both fighters raised a hand as they returned to their corner.

Second Round Action:

Ramos and Arguello met in ring center. Arguello looked determined and landed a nice combination, including a thudding body shot. Ramos gave no indication that either punch affected him. The two fighters kept trying to work inside, and after a clash of heads, It’s Alexis who backed up and hit an oncoming Ramos with two hard jabs. Referee Estaves, in the meantime, motioned to the judges that it was an accidental clash of heads that cut Arguello on the corner of his right eye. Arguello took another wicked shot to the body and this one made El Flaco Exposivo wince. Arguello retaliated with a body shot of his own but just managed to avoid a powerful counter from Ramos.

Ramos bulled Arguello into the ropes but this time Arguello quickly spun out to the precarious spot, and clipped Mano with a solid right that knocked him back into the ropes. Sensing that he might have stunned Ramos with the right hand, a dangerous Arguello let loose with a volley of punches, high and low, and a final uppercut timed Ramos trying to come off the ropes and hurt him. His knees buckled and for a moment it looked like Mando was going to go down.

However, the sturdy Mexican American stayed upright and instinctively fired back instead of curling into a protective shell. Arguello, still concentrating on his assault, ate a short, left hook and a right hand that beat an Arguello jab. Ramos bulled his way forward, off the ropes and Arguello put some distance between the two fighters, plainly hoping to keep Mando on the end of his punches.

The crowd was in an uproar, thrilled by the constant action. There was certainly no “feeling out” process, not from the ringing of the first bell. Round two was about to end when Arguello once again timed a wide right from Ramos and countered with a hard left to the body. The Nicaraguan fighter punctuated the end of the round with a stiff right jab to the face of Ramos.

Third Round Action:

Arguello’s corner did a good job on the cut Arguello had sustained, and the position of the cut failed to present a detrimental effect. Even if the cut reopened, it would have streamed down Arguello’s cheek and not run into his eye. There seemed to be little or no swelling around the cut.

The opening of the round followed the same pattern as the two before it, with Ramos stalking toward Arguello and Alexis jabbing and moving sideways, never backwards. When it happened, it happened so unexpectedly that there was no immediate reaction before the crowd was on its feet. Arguello started to slide left and Mando shifted with him, when Arguello smoothly reversed directions and let fly a hard right that caught Ramos right above his left ear. Ramos sank straight down, first to his knees and then to all fours. Arguello retreated to his corner and Esteves picked up the count at 4. As the count reached 7, there was no effort on the part of Ramos to get up. However, at 8 Mando Ramos regained his feet.

Ramos started to move towards Arguello, who was still in his corner, and Esteves had to jump in front of Ramos. Esteves wiped off Ramos’ gloves and talked to him. Still holding Ramos back with a hand to his chest, Esteves motioned for Arguello to come out, signaling that the fight could continue. Esteves backed up and Mando take a quick step forward and planted himself where he stood, letting Arguello come to him. Arguello obliged and moved toward Ramos behind the jab. Ramos blocked one but the second punch of the double jab split Ramos’ gloves and seemed to rock him.

Arguello, aggressive but not with complete abandon, continued to economize on his punches, digging to the body and still jabbing. Ramos was doing little in the way of offense, seemingly still pulling himself together and trying to avoid another big shot from Alexis.

With a minute gone in the third and Ramos apparently regaining his senses and confidence attacked Arguello, winging each punch with bad intentions. It was a mistake to do so. Arguello once again relied on his superior skills to nullify much of Mando’s attack; and in return Arguello landed shots with unerring accuracy. A short uppercut on the inside forced Ramos to grab Arguello and try to clinch. Arguello pushed the Mexican American off, stepped back and gained enough room to throw his deadly right. As if Arguello didn’t have enough power of his own, Ramos aided the force of the punch by stepping into it.

By the time Esteves started to move in, Armando Ramos pitched face first onto the canvas. Esteves crouched down to begin the count, reached 3 and waved the bout off.

Pandemonium rocked the establishment. Arguello and his corner were jubilant, while Ramos’ corner huddle around him, while the ring side physician administered to the fallen fighter. Arguello, living up to his reputation, made his way to the semi-circle and peered over the crouched gathering just as Ramos sat up. As Ramos was helped to his feet, the two fighters hugged.

As Arguello turned away, Ramos shouted “Rematch!”

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