

The things they say

“I am happy to have this fight. I have had a lot of opponents with big mouths, but I never had an opponent with such a big mouth like David Haye. I will be pleased to shut his big mouth with my big fist. None of the opponents I have had were as provocative as David Haye, so I am glad to shut his mouth by putting my fist in his mouth. There is no way this fight will go the whole distance”

Wladimir Klitschko talking to *espn.com* after the fight with David Haye was finalised.

“It’s been an incredible journey and it’s come to the point where we’ve won a world title. Now we can have some fun, see how far we can go with this title, see what we can add to it”

Bernard Dunne after his stunning win over Ricardo Cordoba.

“I have received punishment in a number of fights and I’ve never been so swollen as I was when I left the fight with Margarito”

Miguel Cotto after Antonio Margarito’s hand wraps were found to contain a plaster of paris like substance.

LETTER FROM AMERICA

by **Graham Houston**

Home and away?

Did Cordoba’s curious tactical approach assist his demise against Dunne?



CAREER-BEST EFFORT saw Dunne wrest the title from the uncharacteristically aggressive southpaw Panamanian

Boxing is full of surprises. When Bernard Dunne fought Ricardo Cordoba it seemed that a classy, tactical match was going to be the order of the day. Instead, the 9,000 crowd in Dublin plus viewers watching on TV saw a gruelling, bloody war.

Dunne surprised me. I never expected him to be punching as hard as he was in this 8st 10lbs title fight. Watching on the internet (courtesy of the Irish national broadcaster, RTE), I was impressed by Dunne’s hitting power. He was really hammering the Panamanian southpaw with heavy shots.

Cordoba surprised me, too, by fighting an uncharacteristically aggressive fight. I’d seen Cordoba several times and he always seemed to me to be a slick stylist, moving this way and that, making an opponent miss, countering, hitting and not getting hit. He used this style against Wladimir Sidorenko in Germany and also when he lost narrowly to Pongsakorn in Thailand, another sturdy pressure fighter, Cordoba’s only

defeat before meeting Dunne.

Yet here Cordoba was, going right at Dunne, trying to run right over the Irish fighter.

I turned to a Panamanian boxing contact, Jose Chu. What was going on?

Chu told me: “In Panama we all knew that Cordoba was not going to box, since he and his trainers said he was going to be the attacker in the fight and many people backed up this strategy.

“Cordoba and his people, and many Panamanian fans, think that Cordoba’s style of hitting and not getting hit does not look good in Europe.

“After the first fight with Sidorenko, which ended in a draw despite many people thinking he won clearly, Cordoba made a more aggressive fight the second time and looked very tired and weak in the final rounds. He loses too much energy trying to be more aggressive while getting hit more. He saves energy by boxing, which is his natural style. I will put it this way: Cordoba’s instructions are to box in

Panama, Puerto Rico and the U.S., and be more aggressive in Asia, Mexico and Europe.”

So, Cordoba was sent out to fight an aggressive fight — and it almost paid off, because when Dunne went down twice in the fifth round I thought that the finish might have been near.

Dunne must have been in amazing condition, though, because when he came back to box well in the sixth you would never have guessed that he had been in deep trouble in the previous round.

As we learned afterwards, however, Dunne was behind on all three judges’ scorecards when he suddenly wobbled Cordoba with a left hook and ended the fight with three knockdowns in the 11th round.

Would things have been different had Cordoba used his normal “boxing” style? I’m not sure that they would. Dunne was primed to produce the greatest effort of his career.

Whether Dunne can reach these heights ever again remains to be seen, but on this night he was quite magnificent.