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Garcia fights off arm injury for national title

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By KYLE GLASER, STAFF WRITER

MESQUITE, Nev. • A common claim during trash talking is someone stating that he could win a fight against someone else utilizing just one arm.

Ryan Garcia actually did it, and he did it on a national stage.

With his right arm immobilized due to a rotator cuff injury, the 12-year old from Adelanto defeated Andres Borrego to win the Junior Division, 95-pound title at the Junior Golden Gloves Nationals at CasaBlanca Resort and Casino this past weekend.

"I just outboxed him," Garcia said. "I had to box him with just my left hand. I'd jab him and when he came in I countered him with a left hook a lot."

It was the second Junior Golden Gloves National title for Garcia. He won the Bantam Division, 70-pound championship in 2009 when he was 10 years old.

Garcia's father and trainer Henry said that what helped Ryan win was that Borrego was a brawler, allowing Garcia to use his smarts and counterattack.

"The strategy that we took was to outbox him because this guy was known to be a brawler," Henry said. "In the second round Ryan scored 15 points just on the jab and hook alone, and that's what kept the distance and kept Borrego from coming in."

Garcia had initially hurt his right, dominant arm three weeks ago, and severely aggravated the injury in his semifinal win.

Henry asked him if he wanted to throw in the towel due to the injury before the final fight, but Garcia insisted on fighting.

"I knew I could beat him with one arm," Garcia said. "I'm smart in the ring and I know what to do. I know how he fought because I saw him the night before and I knew I could beat him with one arm."

Garcia backed up his claims with his three round win on points.

The thought of winning a championship helped him fight through the pain, he said, including when he lost total use of his right arm in the third round of the final bout. He had been able to land at least one or two punches with it the first two rounds of the final fight, but it was useless by the third round.

But he was able to fight through and claim another championship in his young career.

Both Ryan and Henry said it was the best championship of his career because of the injury.

They are looking at all medical options, including surgery. But for now, both are extremely happy and still somewhat amazed at what was accomplished.

"It just shows the character and the determination he has," Henry said.

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