

Sugar Shane Mosley Sweet, but Wright Call in End

Written by Jake Donovan

Saturday, 20 November 2004 18:00

“Sugar” Shane Mosley made all of the necessary adjustments from the first fight, but still managed to come up short as consensus junior middleweight champion Ronald “Winky” Wright earned a closer-than-expected majority decision tonight at the Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Wright started out the fight – in fact the first four rounds – controlling Shane with his jab and walking Mosley down, much like he had done eight months prior in the same arena. Mosley was far more active this time around, but was unable to stop Wright from coming inside as the defending champion had an answer for everything Shane had to offer early on.

Seemingly on the verge of another dominant win, Wright came out extremely overconfident in the fifth round, and nearly paid the price. Mosley was able to land early, but Wright was insistent on convincing all that Shane couldn't hurt him. At first, he was simply shaking his head as Shane would land, but then uncharacteristically dropped his hands and stood center ring, daring the former triple-division champ to hit him.

“I just wanted to let him know that he couldn't hurt me,” was Wright's explanation after the fact.

Shane clearly proved him wrong, first going downstairs, then coming back up top with a clean overhand right at a wide open target. Winky smiled, but the punch clearly did far more damage than he had anticipated, as he pitched forward and was forced to clinch Shane. Wright fought on even terms the rest of the round, but with his antics in the first half having all but give away the round to Shane, and in essence, allowed him back into the fight.

After receiving a brutal tongue lashing from lifelong trainer Dan Birmingham in between rounds, Wright was able to regain control of the fight and take the sixth. However, Mosley was able to momentarily make good on new trainer Joe Goossen's prediction of turning the tide in the second half of the fight. Mosley fought well enough to take the seventh and eighth.

Wright went back to controlling the tempo with his jab, and was able to repeatedly land jab-straight left combinations throughout the ninth and tenth round. His efforts appeared to be enough to put the fight away, but Mosley fought back well enough in the championship rounds to make the fight a lot closer than the HBO broadcast team had claimed throughout the evening.

While Shane showed major improvement from the first fight, the best he could muster up was a 114-114 draw on the scorecard of Hubert Earle. That score was overruled by Tom Kaczmarek and Duane Ford, both of whom scored it 115-113 for Wright.

The win was the ninth straight for Wright since losing to Fernando Vargas five years ago. He runs his record to 48-3 (25 KO) in making his sixth straight title defense, and first defense of his unified title. If he has his way, a defense at junior middleweight will not be in his immediate future.

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"I want Tito Trinidad. He looked the best out of everyone to me... after Tito, then Bernard or de la Hoya. I just want to give the fans what they want to see."

What they wanted to see was a rematch that was more entertaining than the original. Both fighters delivered.

"It was a very good fight," said Wright, giving credit to his familiar foe. "Shane came to fight, he did a lot. He had better defense this time... He's got all the heart in the world. I take my hat off to him. He's a great fighter."

Mosley returned the compliment, even if he disagreed with the decision.

"At the end of the fight, I was stronger, but hey... the judges gave it to the champ. But what can I say," said a dejected Shane, who has now lost four of his last six fights in dropping to 39-4, 1 NC (35KO). "But he's tough... he has that great right jab and that southpaw stance. It makes it a little tough to get inside and pick up with the different shots. He's a hell of a fighter, and gave it his all. I thought I won, but... we just move on."

Where Shane moves onto is unclear. What he did rule is abandoning the division.

"I don't think so," said Shane in response to a suggestion that he drop back down to welterweight. "I think that my right weight is 154. I have to get back in the gym and work at some things, but I think that 154 is my weight, though."

It may be Shane's weight, but two fights in 2004 have made it clear that the division belongs to Wright.

The rematch was promoted by Gary Shaw Productions, LLC, and was televised live by HBO's World Championship Boxing.

UNDERCARD ACTION

On the undercard, Ian Gardner defeated Tokunbo Olajide by majority decision.