

Boxing Coverage from South Africa: Makeba upset by Vetyeka

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Sunday, 06 February 2005 18:00

MPUMULANGA, South Africa---Simpfiwe Vetyeka put on a smooth and disciplined performance to win the South African bantamweight title on Friday night at Graceland Casino in Mpumulanga.

From the start of the fight it was apparent that WBC International and SA bantamweight champion Khululekhe Makeba (20-1-3 11 KOs) was in for an uphill battle against Vetyeka (10-0 4 KOs).

A strangely subdued champion seemed to be at a loss of any real strategy against a man who is considerably taller, with a longer reach and a slick jab. Although Makeba, who a few years ago enjoyed a # 1 contender ranking in the WBC as a junior flyweight, put up an impressive performance to stop Cedric Conway to win the vacant bantamweight title in his previous outing, he seemed totally out of the contest for most of the 12-round bout.

The few times he managed to reach the younger challenger with body or head blows it was clear that he hurt him, but he was unable to do so on a consistent basis. He was put off by Vetyeka's stiff jab greeting him in the face and on the side of the head every time he tried to do so.

Vetyeka, who is managed by Mzi Mguni, who has produced a crop of respected world champions in the past like Vuyani Bungu, Mbulelo Botile, Welcome Ncita, Hawk Makepula and Zolani Petelo, fought with a purpose and a plan.

While not the most exciting encounter, the fight was a great example of what happens when one boxer enters the ring with a plan and the other does not.

Many critics felt that Makeba made the wrong move by moving all the way up to the bantamweight division and perhaps this bout proves them right. Makeba is a good solid boxer with impressive power for his size. He does however not possess the skills needed by a short boxer to take on and beat skilful taller fighters. Dropping a division lower may prove prudent as he certainly is still a world class proponent.

For Vetyeka, on the other hand, the world is his oyster. Having defeated the current WBC International champion in only his 11th pro outing, although that title was not at stake, will open international doors for the youngster who has the potential of developing into a fine champion.

Other big news from South Africa this week was that former WBO heavyweight world champion Corrie Sanders has again hung up his gloves after suffering a back injury during training in Germany. Sanders made an impressive return to the ring in December and was looking to clinch a return with either of the Klitschko brothers later this year.