

## Myekeni and Makaringe Keep Winning

Written by Deon Potgieter  
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Mhikiza "Showtime" Myekeni claimed the WBC international flyweight title on Friday night at the Graceland Casino in Mpumalanga in an exciting fight which deserves an encore. Myekeni (19-2 9 KOs), a former IBO flyweight world champion, who was stripped due to inactivity, was perhaps fortunate to win the title without the fight reaching an appropriate ending.

He was facing Filipino fighter Sonnyboy Jarro (17-3-3 9 KOs) in what turned out to be an intriguing matchup between speed and accuracy versus heart and power. From the opening bell it was clear that Jarro wanted to make this a quick fight and was looking to land that one big punch to end it. He threw big left and right hooks and worried little about his defense. Myekeni, who is a skilled boxer with quick hands, took the opportunity to plough his left jabs and right hooks into his rival's face almost at will.

In the second round the weakness in Jarro's defense almost cost him the match, as the South African landed with two left hooks to drop him to the floor. The Filipino fighter struggled to his feet, but managed to come right back into the thick of things and pushed Myekeni onto the back foot. Although in trouble, Jarro did a magnificent job of fighting his way back against an opponent who was trying his utmost to finish his wounded prey.

The third round started as the second ended with the two warriors going at it with complete disdain for each other. This time it was Jarro who got in and landed a big right hook crisp on the jaw of Myekeni to drop him for an eight-count. The South African's greater speed and flowing left jab kept Jarro at bay, but this was fast becoming a war between two men who wanted the title. At the end of the round Myekeni caught Jarro with a beautiful short left on the chin, which you could see he felt all the way to his toes.

The battle continued in round four with both boxers alternating between being the aggressor moving forward and then fighting off the back foot. But Jarro was certainly the bull and Myekeni the matador for the most of the fourth. By the fifth round both boxers had developed a respect for their opponent's blows and now carried their hands higher, but they continued to punish each other in a fight which tipped in either one's favor throughout.

Going into the sixth round, Myekeni was slightly ahead on points, having landed the higher number of blows, but it was still anybody's fight. Suddenly without warning, Jarro's face contorted in pain and he sunk to the canvas without any blows being exchanged. The referee counted him out and Jarro's corner rushed to his aid. A violent cramp in his right leg had caused Jarro to collapse and he was unable to continue.

Following this unsatisfying end to what was a great matchup until that point, Jarro's trainer Warren Jarro said that his man had battled to make the weight with the current prevailing cold conditions in the country. Not taking anything away from Myekeni - he is a deserving winner - I'm sure I'm not the only one who would be happy to see Jarro get another opportunity to face the new champion.

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Also on the bill, Joseph “Smoking Joe” Makaringe (27-2 22 KOs) made his eighth successful defense of his national welterweight title by stopping a very game Welcome Ntshingila (10-4-1 3 KOs) in the eighth round. The challenger set the pace from the start and by and large looked the better boxer of the two. Makaringe fought as though both his hands were wrapped in cotton. He was extremely stiff and was often slapping, and while he landed a tremendous amount of blows to the face of Ntshingila, they carried very little power. I would not be surprised if it was revealed that his hands were fractured; if not this man must hang up his gloves, because there is something wrong with him.

The end of this one was also not satisfying, as the referee stepped in and called it off after 2:53 of round six, saying nothing was coming back from the challenger. He had only received seven unanswered blows when the referee called off the fight, because, he said, they were not of a devastating nature. Ntshingila was nursing a hideously swollen left ear from all the slaps he'd taken on it, but still looked clear-eyed. With his ear blocked, I can only surmise the referee anticipated that he was going to find it hard to defend himself, and he was, admittedly, a little off balance.

Despite having lost, the challenger looks to have a bright future. The champion, on the other hand, needs to do some introspection. He's better than what he showed in this fight, and had he been in the ring with a more experienced man, he could have lost his crown. Jose Sulaiman was recently quoted as saying Africa is the future of boxing and South Africa is integral to that future. There certainly is a notable change in the caliber, conditioning and commitment of boxers starting to come to the fore in the southern most tip of the continent. If those who control the game can now follow the fighters' example, perhaps Sulaiman is right . . . on this occasion.