

McBride Defeats Tyson: Iron Mike Announces Retirement

Written by Aaron Tallent
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Mike Tyson (50-6) did not answer the bell for the seventh round in his bout with Kevin McBride (33-4-1) on Saturday night at Washington, DC's MCI Center. He announced his retirement shortly after the fight.

"I don't have it in my heart anymore," said the former two-time heavyweight champion.

It was the second fight in an openly acknowledged series of seven fights in which Tyson would have earned enough money to pay off his debts. It was supposed to be Tyson's attempt to at least take one more shot at the heavyweight title before packing it in.

At the opening bell, Tyson came out strong throwing hooks to the body. McBride, however, came out loose and did a good job stemming Tyson's attack. He kept his hands up. He clinched. And he put his weight on Tyson when the ex-champ tried to go inside.

Each round started the same. Tyson would come out firing punches while McBride would stand his ground. Tyson would tire and his attack would wane.

The fourth round was Tyson's best. "Iron Mike" came out throwing bombs and for a moment it looked like the bout would end there. But McBride once again found his footing, landed his own shots, and clinched. Tyson, however, did not quit, but he had punched himself out by the end of the round.

In the fifth Tyson once again swarmed out of his corner, but the assault petered out quickly. In the final second of the round, Tyson found himself on the ropes after being rocked by a vicious McBride uppercut.

The Tyson boxing's rubberneckers know and love answered the bell for the sixth. Tyson headbutted McBride's face opening a cut under his eye. Then he pulled one of his old tactics and tried to break McBride's arm in the middle of a clinch. After a few breakups and delays - the ref deducted two points for the infractions - Tyson once again found himself against the ropes. McBride dropped him with a series of shots as the bout ended. Before the start of the seventh, Tyson's handlers called it quits.

At the post-fight press conference, Tyson said he trained hard and was in good shape but said that he could feel his age in the ring. As the press conference closed, his manager, Rock Newman, praised Tyson for a successful and exciting career.

"Mike Tyson, at his best, was the most exciting athlete in the history of the planet," said Newman, who went on to lead a standing ovation for Tyson, which the ex-champ quickly ended.

"That's bulls--- man," said Tyson. "I don't need nobody applauding me. I've always been on my own. I've never asked anybody for anything."

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“Iron Mike” had not fought since last July, when Danny Williams knocked him out in Louisville, Kentucky. In that bout “Iron Mike” blew his knee out in the first round and lost a great deal of mobility. Williams survived a barrage of punishment and sent Tyson to the canvas in the fourth round.

In spite of that, he was once again given another chance. More than 15,000 people came out to the MCI Center to watch this event and Showtime marketed the fight as a pay-per-view package.

On the undercard, Laila Ali (21-0) retained her WBC and WIBA super middleweight titles with a third round TKO of Erin Toughill (6-2-1). Ali came out strong, winning the first two rounds and bloodying Toughill’s nose. In the third, an Ali right cross staggered Toughill. She followed with a storm of punches, pinning Toughill into a corner and forcing referee Joe Cooper to stop the fight at 1:59 in the third round.

Ali’s father, Muhammad Ali, often absent from her fights, sat ringside at the fight and received a standing ovation when he came in the ring to congratulate her after the bout. “The Greatest’s” attendance drew massive cheers throughout the night.

The MCI Center also gave a warm welcome to Washington, DC’s Sharmba Mitchell (56-4) as he won the NABA welterweight title from Chris Smith (19-2-1) by technical decision in a painful fashion. Mitchell, who was knocked out by Kostya Tszyu last year, came out the aggressor, winning the first few rounds.

Sixteen seconds into the fifth round, Smith threw a left hook, which Mitchell pulled away from. When Smith closed in to follow-up, he accidentally butted Mitchell, creating a sizable gash under his left eye and leaving him unable to continue. The fight went to the scorecards, which had Mitchell ahead by scores of 48-47, 49-46 and 50-45. Mitchell announced to the crowd that he would give Smith a rematch.

In the non-televised bouts, Australian flyweight Hussein H. Hussein (28-2) won a 10-round decision over Evaristo Primero (14-8-1). Junior welterweight Anthony Peterson knocked out Wayne Fletcher (4-12-1) in the sixth round to bring his record to 6-0. Tyrone Barnett, a junior lightweight, made his professional debut and scored his first career victory with a 4-round unanimous over Mike Sayles (2-5). Another junior welterweight, Ronald Boyd (1-1) garnered his first career victory against Joseph Van Daniker (5-3-1). However, that win was due to a disqualification.