

Gejon Robbed – But Hawk Does the Job

Written by Deon Potgieter
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There are a number of countries which have developed reputations that if you're fighting the hometown boy you had better knock him out or be prepared to lose on points. Denmark, Italy and some would say Canada are amongst these ... and I'm afraid to say South Africa looks to be heading in the same direction.

This past Friday Elmer Gejon from the Phillipines was robbed of the WBC International mini-flyweight title against Tshepo Lefele. Lefele, undefeated after 12 bouts with 6 KO's is a rising prospect on the local scene and was expected to take the title, but most expected him to earn it; unfortunately this was not the case. Gejon (12-7-1, KO's), who is the WBO's #6 contender and the WBC #17 contender, was the better man on this night and deserved to win the vacant title.

A capacity crowd at the Orient Theatre in East London witnessed an entertaining match between an experienced one-dimensional boxer and an inexperienced talented boxer. Experience triumphed, but inexperience was rewarded. Both boxers made a cautious start trying to find their range. Lefele had both a height and reach advantage, but did not use either to further his chances at a victory. Gejon threw some good straight punches and overhand rights shading the round.

In round two both boxers started throwing harder punches. While Lefele found his range with his left jab, Gejon continued using his right to good effect and took the second round as well. Lefele made the mistake of crouching down to Gejon's height instead of using it as an advantage. He managed to land a solid right on the Filipino, but it was clear that this was a step-up in class and one Lefele was not ready for.

In the fourth Lefele started to fight from the outside and caused Gejon to miss repeatedly with his right. His left jab started landing with good effect and suddenly Lefele looked to be getting his act together, catching Gejon with a good left uppercut at the bell and claiming his first round of the fight.

Lefele continued his good form in the fifth and dazzled Gejon with quick combinations. No longer intimidated by his first international opponent, Lefele's confidence rose as he secured his second round. In the sixth Gejon seemed at a loss as to how to handle his opponent. Going into the seventh the fight was even and Lefele, for a reason only he will know, moved away from a winning strategy and reverted to trying to fight Gejon up close and paid for it, as this allowed the man opposite him to land some good blows. The round was even.

Lefele's nose which started bleeding in the fourth round was still flowing freely in the eighth. He reverted to crouching down again to meet his shorter opponent and going against the style he had used with such good effect in rounds four through six. In the ninth Gejon landed a three punch combination ending with a clean left hook. The South African went down. Although Gejon pursued his man looking to finish the job, Lefele managed to ride the wave and keep his

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attacker at bay with his left hook.

Gejon looked for the opening again in the tenth and focused on hunting his man down instead of throwing punches. This left the door open for Lefele to claim the round with a series of well placed jabs. The eleventh round was fairly even with Gejon landing the more effective punches and Lefele landing more blows. Gejon started the last round as he started the first – moving forward and throwing punches – and undoubtedly finished the stronger of the two. Gejon won the fight, but the judges scored it 114-114, 115-113 and 114-113 for Lefele.

The Eastern Cape boxing fans are a knowledgeable crowd and are a hard crowd to win over. Following the announcement of the result they booed their hometown boy and cheered Gejon. Clearly they also thought the Filipino had been robbed. The fact the Gejon won them over is a telling one. He was robbed by poor judging and boxing is the poorer for it.

In the main fight of the night WBC International bantamweight champion Hawk Makepula (26-3, 17 KOs) won a laborious ten round decision over Russia's Andrey Kosten (16-5, 5 KOs). Kosten has an awkward style and not one I would ever want to see again. Hopefully Makepula will now be matched against a higher caliber of opponent on his quest to return to world title honors. The former WBO and WBU flyweight world champion still has a lot to offer and has the ability to claim a credible crown in the near future.