

Duddy TKOs Mackie at Hammerstein

Written by George Kimball
Friday, 04 November 2005 19:00

John Duddy dominated from start to finish in his first New York main event, but Byron Mackie had his moments – usually just after he had climbed off the canvas. It was as if it took getting knocked down to make Mackie mad, and he had plenty of chances to do both.

Initially booked as the co-feature, the Duddy-Mackie fight wound up as the main event after Shannon Briggs was kayoed by a Hurricane, but the unbeaten Irishman made the most of it. Before a lively sellout crowd at the Hammerstein Ballroom Friday night, the engaging young middleweight from Derry scored his 13th win in 13 pro bouts when he stopped Canadian veteran Mackie in four.

Briggs was to have been the headline performer on Cedric Kushner's "Homecoming" card, but pulled out on a week's notice, citing the Hurricane. Not Hurricane Carter or even Hurricane McNeeley. Hurricane *Wilma*. The onetime linear heavyweight champ, now based in Florida, claimed that the weather attending the tropical storm had curtailed his training. The excuse sounded even more feeble when Briggs resurfaced just days later, contemplating a fight in Arkansas for later in the month. IF Briggs' loss proved to be Duddy's gain, it did increase the pressure on the latter to perform spectacularly. He didn't disappoint.

Mackie (25-12) is a 31-year-old journeyman whose best fighting was done as a welterweight, but as recently as three years ago he had beaten Alex Hilton for the Canadian middleweight title, and didn't figure to be a soft touch for Duddy.

"He was very tough and durable," said Duddy. "He'd had 36 pro fights. This is a tough game, and you don't have that many if you're a part-timer. He caught me a couple of times all right – usually just after I thought I'd hurt *him*."

Duddy knocked Mackie down once in the first, again in the third, and twice more in the fourth before referee Wayne Kelly stopped it at 1:32 of the round, and ironically, the one round in which he didn't score a knockdown was the one in which he came to believe he'd won the fight.

"I hit him with a body shot in the second and I could hear the air come rushing out of him. I tried to go after him again, but he became very careful about covering up his body," recalled Duddy.

Mackie had already hit the deck in the first round, after Duddy threw a lazy left hook which missed. The Canadian ducked and pulled away from the punch he saw, but as he did, Duddy caught him with a short right to the top of the head that sent him down.

In the third Duddy followed a right with a right uppercut that once again knocked Mackie down, and in the fourth a left uppercut and a sweeping right floored the Canadian again. He got to his feet, but Duddy moved in and delivered a left to the body and Mackie sagged toward the floor. He was hanging onto the ring ropes by the time Kelly's count reached 'four,' at which point the referee deemed the balance of the exercise superfluous.

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The Hammerstein was packed with Duddy's Irish supporters, and while it's difficult to imagine that anyone left disappointed, at least a few people did.

A small segment of the crowd, who may have wagered a bob or two on the prospect, seemed let down that the hard-hitting Irishman had departed from form and allowed a few of the ring-card girls to make their appearances this time before he polished off his opponent.

"I'm not stupid," said Duddy unapologetically. "I know that as I move up in class they're not *all* going to be first-round knockouts. This was a guy with a lot of experience. He'd had twice as many wins as I'd had fights, and I knew I couldn't go in there trying to blast him out. I could see he was just waiting for me to start throwing bombs. I was pleased with the way I paced myself and took my time."

It would appear that Matthew Macklin is going to be even more disappointed. Macklin (15-1) is a Birmingham-based, Manchester-trained middleweight who has done most of his fighting in the UK. He stopped Anthony Little in two at the New Alhambra in Philly the previous weekend, and there had been some speculation that he and Duddy might fight next spring – possibly for the Irish title currently held by Jim Rock, who is said to be contemplating retirement.

At least one Irish-American newspaper had described that matchup as a done deal, and it certainly had outward appearances of being promising when Macklin was introduced (as, curiously, the "Irish middleweight champion," which he is not) before the bout and posed for photos with the victorious Duddy afterward, but when he met with a gaggle of reporters at ringside afterward, the Derryman left little doubts that a Macklin fight is not in his immediate plans.

"I never even met him before tonight, and then it was just to congratulate him as a fellow Irishman who's doing well," said Duddy, who termed any talk of a fight between the two "just a bunch of bull in newspapers."

"We come from a very small island," he explained. "I'm doing well and he's doing well, and there'd be little point in the two of us duking it out and messing things up for the other right now."

Irish promoter Brian Peters had expressed interest in putting together Duddy and Macklin at the Mohegan Sun next March. (Since Peters also promotes Rock, he might have been in a position to guarantee delivery of the Irish title belt.) The McLoughlin Brothers, who manage Duddy, have other ideas, and propose to have Duddy topping a St. Patricks Day card at Madison Square Garden.

Duddy's countryman, stablemate, and sometime sparring partner James Moore won his fourth bout in as many tries with an impressive third-round TKO of Brooklyn-based Swede Manji Conteh (5-6). Moore, who was knocked down by journeyman Hollister Elliot in his last fight (he got back up to stop Elliott a round later) managed to stay on his feet through this one, and put Conteh down with a short right just before the bell ended the second. Taking up where he had left off, Moore floored Conteh again in the third, and referee Tommy Chiarantano stopped it at

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2:34 of the round without completing his count.

Roberto Duran protégé Richard Gutierrez ran his pro mark to 20-0 with a 4th round TKO of North Carolinian Edson Aguirre (11-4-1), while South African Takalani Ndlovu (24-3) captured the coveted IBO junior featherweight belt with a unanimous decision over Mexican Armando Guerrero (20-5-6). The title might have been meaningless, but the combatants were well matched, making for an entertaining scrap, and although Ndlovu won going away on all three cards (as well as that of *TheSweetScience.com*), Guerrero fought back until he began to weary over the final three stanzas.

In other early bouts, Bronx junior welter Jorge Teron (8-0) stopped Terrence Thomas (3-6-1) when the latter's cornermen ran up the white towel in the third round, while junior lightweights Joe Rosa (0-0-1) of the Bronx and Angelo Acevedo of Brooklyn (0-2-1) fought to a draw, split 38-38 on all three cards.

HAMMERSTEIN BALLROOM

NEW YORK CITY

NOV. 4, 2005

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

John Duddy, 160, Derry, Ireland TKO'd Byron Mackie, 160, Orangeville, Ont. (4)

Richard Gutierrez, 155, Afjona, Colombia TKO'd Adson Aguerre, 159½, Greensboro, NC (6)

James Moore, 156, Arklow, Ireland TKO'd Manjie Conteh, 156, Stockholm, Sweden (3)

JUNIOR WELTERS

Jorge Teron, 138, Bronx, NY TKO'd Terrence Thomas, 138, Newburgh, NY (3)

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Joe Ross, 126½, Bronx drew with Angelo Acevedo, 129½, Brooklyn (4)

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Takalani Ndlovu, 121, Johannesburg, South Africa dec. Armando Guerrero, 121½, Aguascaliente, Mexico (12) (Wins IBO title)