

Mohegan Sun Déjà Vu

Written by George Kimball
Saturday, 18 February 2006 19:00

UNCASVILLE, Conn. – The last time Rasheem Brown walked into the Mohegan Sun Arena, he got himself beaten by Ohio journeyman Jose Spearman back in 2004. Dick Flaherty was the referee.

Rasheem must have thought it was déjà vu all over again Saturday night. With Flaherty the third man in the ring once again, the enigmatic Philly middleweight somnambulated his way through ten rounds – and came away with another loss, this one to an Ohio journeyman named Darnell Boone in the main event of Cappiello Promotions' six-bout card at the Uncasville arena Saturday night.

The crowd had grown increasingly restive with each tepid round, and Brown didn't have much audience support left by the time the judges' tallies were announced. Don Trella's 99-91 verdict in Boone's favor might have been a bit over the top, but Don Ackerman (98-92) and Glenn Feldman (97-93) weren't far behind in their displeasure for Brown's performance.

All three of Brown's career losses have come in his last five fights. Moreover, it was the fourth time in six bouts he had been extended the distance, failing to display the firepower that had seen him put away a dozen of his first 14 victims. (One could easily infer from this trend that Brown is easily discouraged if he doesn't put his quarry away early.) It was not, in any case, much fun to watch, but Fox SportsNet viewers will get the opportunity when the battle of bearded middleweights is aired on tape-delay. We'll do our best to give you ample warning.

It was a well-deserved win for Boone (now 10-3-1), of Youngstown, Ohio, while it's back to the drawing board yet again for the 29-year-old Brown, whose record fell to 17-3 with the loss.

Mikey-Mike Oliver and Castulo Gonzalez are a pair of action fighters who have served Rich Cappiello well, and when the promoter put something called the USBO belt up for grabs and let them scrap for it he was aware that he'd be diminishing one of his star attractions.

The two traded leather from the outset, but the hyperkinetic Oliver, who went into the fight 11-0, traded more of it.

Gonzalez (7-2), a former Guatemalan Olympian now based in Wilmington, Mass., had put up a game fight without winning a round on Ackerman's card (as well as ours; Steve Epstein and George Smith had given him one apiece), and when Oliver finally knocked him down – with a right jab, followed by two lefts and then a perfect right hook – in the ninth round, Steve Smoger wasted no time in counting, folding his arms around the beaten warrior the moment he got up.

Oliver, who is apparently more impressed by a USBO belt than we are, ran around the ring and even up the ring posts displaying his new hardware to his fans. When Mikey-Mike gets wound up for a fight, it's pretty hard to wind him down again. He appeared ready to defend it against a few audience members on his way to the dressing room.

Mohegan Sun Déjà Vu

Written by George Kimball
Saturday, 18 February 2006 19:00

Tony Grano, the heavyweight from Hebron, Conn., needed just a minute and two seconds to put away Stamford's Robert Irizarry, who was making his pro debut. Grano spent nearly a minute sizing his opponent up before connecting with what were essentially the first two punches he threw – a jab that straightened Irizarry up, followed by the short left hook that put him on the canvas.

Irizarry went down hard, and was still floundering about on the floor when Smoger waved if off without a count. Grano is 3-0, Irizarry 0-1.

Had Eddie Bishop and Kevin Watts fought a year or two ago the battle of Massachusetts welterweights might have turned out differently, but Watts has absorbed some punishment in a skein that has seen him lose his last five bouts in a row, He absorbed a lot more last night in what appears to have been his valedictory.

By the third round Bishop was landing almost at will, and Watts' nostrils had sprung twin rivulets, with the blood coursing down into face. At one point in the fourth, Watts appeared to not lose only his balance, but to lose his way completely, as he spun around in a crouch, seemingly blinded by the lights, while a baffled Bishop held off rather than take advantage of the confusion by giving him a swat, which he plainly could have.

Watts returned to his stool after the fourth hopelessly trailing, and directed his corner to run up the white flag of surrender before the bell could announce the fifth.

"I thought he could have finished on his feet," said trainer Jimmy Gifford. "I said 'Kev, are you sure you want to go out this way?' and he did. It had nothing to do with the bloody nose; he said he just didn't have it.

"Give him that," said Gifford, "usually these guys don't know when it's time to get out."

Bishop goes to 9-1-1 with the win, while Watts, who fell to 18-7 with the loss, indicated that it had been his last.

"I got beat by an amateur," said Watts. "It's time to quit."

Joe McCreedy, the Lowell (Mass.) light-heavyweight trained by Dick Ecklund, made short work of North Carolina neophyte David Spear. Never much for defense, McCreedy came out as usual with both guns blazing, and Spear initially seemed happy enough to brawl with him – at least until he got hit.

A pair of right hands – one to the face and one on the top of the head – dropped Spear in a neutral corner half a minute into the fight. He bounced back up, but referee Tony Chiarantano, noting the glazed look on the youngster's face, declined to let the bout resume and halted action after 41 seconds. McCreedy is now 3-0, Spear 0-1.

Lightweight Yasim Mohammad appeared to have caught a break when his scheduled foe, 10-0 Melvin Cumba, failed his physical on medical grounds and was replaced by Lenny DeVictoria, a

Mohegan Sun Déjà Vu

Written by George Kimball

Saturday, 18 February 2006 19:00

Philadelphian with a more modest 7-3 log. Mohammad, a journeyman pro from Dayton who had plainly been brought in to lose to Cumba, appeared invigorated by the switch in opponents, winning the first three rounds on the cards of all three ringside judges.

But two right-hand shots, the second of which floored Mohammad, abruptly turned the entire fight around. Although Mohammad made it to his feet after the knockdown, DeVictoria jumped right back on him, and was raining blows off his helpless opponent when referee Dick Flaherty rescued the Ohioan with 27 seconds left in the fourth. DeVictoria is now 8-3, Mohammad 4-11-3.

* * *

MOHEGAN SUN ARENA
UNCASVILLE, Conn.
Februrary 18, 2006

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Darnell Boone, 160, Youngstown, Ohio dec. Rasheem Brown, 162, Philadelphia (10)

HEAVYWEIGHTS: Tony Grano, 215, Hebron, Conn. KO'd Robert Irizarry, 214½, Stamford, Conn. (1)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Joe McCreedy, 172, Lowell, Mass. TKO'd Dave Spear, 164½, Raleigh, NC (1)

JUNIOR MIDDLES: Eddie Bishop, 147¾, Stoughton, Mass. TKO'd Kevin Watts, 149, South Boston, Mass. (4)

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Lenny DeVictoria, 130, Philadelphia TKO'd Yamin Mohammad, 129, Dayton, Ohio (4)

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Mike Oliver, 122, Hartford, Conn. TKO'd Castulo Gonzalez, 121, Guatemala (9) (Wins USBO title)