

Mosley Was Like Wow

Written by Benn Schulberg
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Shane Mosley has lived to fight another day after Fernando Vargas' left eye could take no more after sustaining punishment for almost ten rounds. A close fight on the scorecards (two judges had it 86-85 for Mosley, the other 86-85 for Vargas) at the time referee Joe Cortez stopped the fight, Vargas rightfully contested the stoppage, forgetting about the fact that not only was his eye tightly shut, but the swelling had spread to the side of his head and down to his cheekbone.

As Mosley said, "His eye swelled up like a balloon and I was like wow!"

Clearly, this was a legitimate reason for Cortez to step in, but you hate to see a fighter go out without a final hurrah, left to ponder what could've been in those last two rounds.

Vargas insisted after the fight that his vision was fine and that he was the one pressing the fight in the tenth round.

"I can still see. I would've stepped up immensely if I knew they were going to stop it. I thought they were just breaking us up, I couldn't believe it."

Throughout the fight, Vargas was unable to defend against Mosley's combination of straight and looping right hands, ultimately costing him the fight despite the fact that he was consistently able to push his opponent back into the ropes. From the opening bell it was evident that Vargas didn't have the skills he had once, looking slower both with his feet and his hands. Still, he showed his heart and resilience in coming back to take charge of the middle rounds and challenge Mosley to raise the level of his game.

Mosley himself looked exactly like what he is at 34-years-old, a good fighter with great determination, but no longer the Sugar Shane that once dazzled us with a frenetic pace highlighted by an onslaught of punches with rapid-fire combinations. That Mosley is seemingly gone after years of fighting the best in the world from lightweights to middleweights. The ring battles may have taken their toll, yet he's still a championship-caliber fighter who's now focused on expanding his legacy and solidifying his spot in boxing history.

Sitting stoically in his dressing room before the fight, Mosley was well aware of this fight's importance and how much it would affect his career as a whole.

"I've prepared for war and now it's time to do the act," he said. "I came for victory."

When asked directly about his legacy, Mosley was quick to say how valuable this moment was to his storied journey. "Yes, I am concerned about my legacy and I'm going to go out there and do my best."

Fernando Vargas left the ring heroically, signifying his "Aztec warrior" spirit in refusing to give in to his opponent despite a badly damaged eye.

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With his fans greeting and hugging him as he exited the Mandalay Bay arena, it was obvious that this disheartening loss didn't deter the beloved adoration of his loyal followers. Despite my initial prediction that a Vargas defeat would signal an end to his career, his courageous performance and competitive effort will likely carry him back into the ring for another shot at regaining old glory.

When asked by Larry Merchant about retirement, Vargas said, "I don't think so. I think I was ahead on the scorecards and was pushing him back. But I'll talk to my family about it and we'll see."

Meanwhile, Mosley seemed relieved to have survived this latest test of attrition and will take a short sojourn before fighting again. He mentioned Floyd Mayweather Jr. as a possible future opponent: "He's the #1 guy out there to beat so he's the one to fight." It's hard to see Mosley standing a chance with Pretty Boy, especially at this point in his career, but give him credit for always wanting to fight the best out there, despite public opinion.

With wily veterans Oscar De La Hoya and Bernard Hopkins as partners in Golden Boy Promotions, it seems fitting that Mosley is fighting in the same family. All three former champions are in the twilight of their careers, but only time will tell how fast age will get in the way of their remarkable achievements (note: Age has finally gotten to Hopkins and don't see why he wants to keep going, seems like he's developed the Holyfield syndrome).

Whether or not Mosley collects the 100K side-bet from Vargas for stopping him (not sure if the circumstances of the TKO are good enough for Vargas to hand over the cash), Mosley has won back more than money could ever buy, he's proved to himself that he's still an elite fighter.