

## Phillips-Feliciano Nonstop Thriller

Written by Alex Stone  
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Who would have possibly thought that a fight between a 42-year-old former champion and a 23-year-old who had been knocked out in three of his last five fights could end up being a nonstop thriller featuring 2,220 punches? Well, certainly not me.

Last night on ESPN's "Friday Night Fights," Vince Phillips 48-10-1 (38 KO's) and Jesse Feliciano 14-5-2 (8 KO's) indeed brought out the best in each other.

Phillips looked like he did in his glory days, being the first man to defeat Kostya Tszyu, via brutal TKO in The Ring magazine 1997 upset of the year. Phillips then went on to defend his IBF Jr. Welterweight title three times, stopping Micky Ward along the way. Feliciano looked more like an unbeaten prospect, ready to take on the world.

Round one began with Feliciano putting on the pressure early, coming on very strong. Phillips used his experience to keep his composure and began to answer back with some shots of his own. But just as fast as the tables turned, they switched again as Feliciano once again became the aggressor. Feliciano began to slip many of Phillips' shots and land frequently. Feliciano's round.

Round two opened up the same way, Feliciano applying fierce pressure, smothering Phillips and not giving him the distance desired to land his jackhammer right. As Feliciano began to land more and more, Phillips attempted to answer back, but to no effect. Feliciano continued to smother Phillips, staying in the pocket, slipping and countering with damaging combinations. The round came to a close with a series of vicious rights by Feliciano. Two rounds to nothing, Feliciano.

The third started with more of the same, pressure by Feliciano. However, Phillips began to use his ring science, making room, slipping punches, and landing a great amount of punches. After some even exchanges, Phillips came back strong, landing a few of those sweet right hands. Round three goes to Phillips.

The fourth round was one of the best of the fight, and the hardest to score. The round opened with both fighters coming out in full attack mode, engaging in some even exchanges. The round was a definite all-out war as both soldiers continued to take and land brutal shots to the head. Phillips began to press Feliciano midway through the round, but Feliciano responded with some nice combinations of his own to end the fourth. Round four... even.

Round five again began with a series of even exchanges. Phillips then began to create some much needed distance between himself and Feliciano and land that right hand now and then. Phillips then put on the pressure, landing some fierce combinations as Feliciano just stood there, telling Phillips to bring it, and he did, staggering Feliciano with a right, flush on the chin. Fifth round, Phillips all the way.

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Round six brought the fight back into the trenches. Feliciano began landing more now, putting on more pressure to the veteran Phillips and keeping him smothered. Phillips briefly came back at the end of the round, but it was not enough.

The seventh opened with Phillips establishing space again and continuing to land that sledgehammer right hand. Feliciano attempted to come back, only to have Phillips slip and counter nearly everything he threw.

Feliciano appeared a bit fatigued in the beginning of round eight as Phillips continued to keep the distance and land his right. However, the more Feliciano got hit, the more motivated he seemed to get, coming back with a saga of devastating rights. Feliciano then began adding some solid hooks and uppercuts to the assault, attacking the former world champ hard as he continued to slip and land brutal combinations.

It was no surprise Phillips stayed on his feet though, seeing as he had went the distance with Ricky "The Hitman" Hatton, back in 2003.

In round nine it was certain that both of these men were true champions, as they continued to engage in this brutal war. Feliciano continued to come on strong, landing crisp, hard punches. Feliciano continued to keep the fight in close quarters, landing nice combinations on the inside, and slipping and countering hard while on the outside. Feliciano's round.

The tenth and final round proved to be no different than the rest of the action packed fight. The round opened with a sweet right hand by Feliciano as he began putting on pressure once again, still keeping the fight in no man's land. Phillips then began to come back hard, not stopping for a second, showing the true heart of a champion. Phillips continued to land nice right hands in the second minute of the round until Feliciano began trading with Phillips, as the two engaged in some even exchanges to end an amazing fight. Round ten... even again.

In the end, Feliciano squeaked passed Phillips in an amazingly fought Majority Decision. One judge scored the fight 93-93, while the other two had Feliciano ahead by a score of 97-93. *The Sweet Science* scored the bout 97-95 for Feliciano.