

I'm In Love Again

Written by Joey Knish
Wednesday, 19 April 2006 19:00

*My heart leaps up when I behold
a rainbow in the sky
so was it when my life began
so is it now I am a man*

- William Wordsworth

The flutter in my heart and butterflies in my stomach came back Wednesday night, and it had nothing to do with a girl.

ESPN delivered an amazing fight Wednesday night – it looked great on paper and was even better in the ring. I love it when a fight exceeds the hype. Kermit “The Killer” Cintron faced off against David Estrada, two fighters who were on the short end of the stick on the same card a year ago, but who were better and tougher fighters because of the experience.

Estrada made an excellent showing despite losing against former champion “Sugar” Shane Mosley in the April 2005 ESPN PPV fight as he was the co-feature to a main event that saw WBO welterweight champion Antonio Margarito physically, mentally and emotionally dominate undefeated prospect Kermit Cintron. Estrada raised his stock as he impressed far beyond what many had expected, while Cintron’s value plummeted when his undefeated record fell along with all the promise he had shown in running off 24 victories without a loss, 22 by way of knockout. “The Killer” was reduced to a weeping young man in the arms of his corner as Margarito had his way and broke apart everything Cintron had built.

Wednesday night we were witness to everything that is right about the sport of boxing and what makes fighters what they are. It was a testament to why we love the sport of boxing when questionable decisions, egos, punks and politics try to steal our lust. In the end the beauty of the sport shines through when given a chance, and it can be lovely.

The fight from the Palm Beach Convention Center was raw and it was war. It was scientific yet it was so primitive. It was a chess game then it was random. It was a battle of wills and there was no loser.

I love the heart and determination of David Estrada.

He came into the bout knowing he would have to pay a heavy price at the hands of Cintron’s power in order to bring the fight into his distance. Estrada paid that price and kept on coming, motivated by lead right hands that found a home on Kermit’s chin, coming over top of his pawing left jabs. David led with left hooks that sometimes hit their mark and just kept throwing whether they did or not.

I also love how Cintron exalted when he won as the bout was stopped. It was as if the weight of the world was off his shoulders and his passion was back faster than it had left.

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Executing a masterful offensive fight plan, Cintron started the bout with precise jabs and as the bout wore on used it as a measuring stick to lace his opponent with stinging right hands. The Puerto Rican mixed his attack well to the head and body and stayed patient when Estrada was hurt so as to not rush in where fools do. During the middle rounds Cintron boxed more intelligently than before as he timed the onrushing hometown favorite Estrada. As Estrada came forward, Cintron would step back and counter with searing left hooks and occasional right uppercuts that rattled the brain.

And I love the work of referee James Warring.

We saw little of Warring early and more of him late in the bout, and exactly when he was needed. There can be no doubt that he came in at just the right time and made the correct decision at the precise moment it was required as the bout was stopped at the 1:13 mark of round ten. Seconds earlier and there may have been some question as to it being premature given the will of David Estrada; seconds later it may have been too late given the power of Kermit Cintron. David Estrada is a "fighter" in every sense of the word and will go on to fight again thanks to the shrewd actions of Warring.

The sun doesn't shine every day, if it did there would be nothing special in a glorious day. Every fight isn't a great one, if that were the case we wouldn't appreciate what we are witness to when a beautiful battle unfolds before us.

Boxing is the best sport in existence when men endure and fight on as they are extended in a physical, emotional and mental battle that must be won. There is no teammate to pass the ball to, no player to blame for a drop. There are weeks of preparation, three-minute increments of execution, and then sixty seconds to adapt the plan.

I love it.