

Buddy McGirt Answers Manny Steward's Charge

Written by Michael Woods
Tuesday, 13 June 2006 19:00

After the second round, after seeing six minutes worth of Antonio Tarver against Bernard Hopkins on June 10, Buddy McGirt knew his man didn't have it.

McGirt sized up his lack of pop, his passivity, his inability to pull the trigger, and determined that this night would not belong to Antonio Tarver. The Magic Man would not be pulling anything out of his hat on this night.

The camp had gone well, Buddy says. There were no spells where Tarver acted his age. There were no periods when the 37-year-old who hungered so desperately for the recognition and respect he felt he deserved looked anything other than a pound-for-pounder.

Buddy's known Tarver for six years so he has a good handle on the man's moods and tendencies.

So, the contention has been put out there that Tarver is shot, a spent fighter who would best be served by taking his earnings and doing the hammock thing. Buddy disagrees. Tarver's not shot, the trainer says. There was something else going on, he feels, but quite what, he isn't sure. Something was on Tarver's mind besides the monumental task at hand on June 10. Money? Romance? Unpaid parking tickets? Buddy didn't really delve into the particulars.

Tarver admitted that something, a mystery source of distraction, was in his head after Hopkins finished mopping the floor with him on Saturday. After six years, McGirt knows when to push. He backed off instead.

Take a vacation, he told Tarver. By yourself. Clear your head. Determine your priorities. Chill.

Viewers noted that McGirt wasn't lighting a fire under Tarver on Saturday in between rounds like they thought he should. Analyst Manny Steward commented on the same. Every punch should be a home run swing, Steward noted. Tarver's down deep on the cards, he needs a grand-slam to pull it out. Why isn't McGirt calling for it?

A reasonable question.

Why, Buddy?

All due respect to Manny, McGirt said, but he doesn't know what Tarver was saying in between the ninth and tenth rounds.

I'm not feeling it, Tarver told McGirt. I don't have it, I ain't gonna get it. I'm just here to survive. After six years, McGirt knows when to push. He nodded. He'd known since the second round that Tarver wasn't in a proper mode to pull it out.

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Do what you're doing, McGirt told him. Jab, keep him off, clinch when you have to.

Tarver no longer had any belief in himself that his in-ring work would or could match the ferocity of his pre-fight hype. So he downgraded his goal. Just survive. Don't get stopped.

It is a mindset for a different breed of fighter than Tarver wants to be regarded as. Pro steppingstones who don't want to be added to the mandatory suspension list have this mindset. Not Tarver. Not until now, anyway. Just let me go the whole 12, he told McGirt.

He went the whole 12. He didn't get kayoed so there was that miniscule consolation.

McGirt says that Tarver has more to give, that he didn't go geriatric before our eyes. He lost focus mentally, the trainer says, and that's that. After six years knowing the fighter, maybe we should take his word for it, and leave it at that.

SPEEDBAG

Yikes, the Corrales-Castillo ScaleGate fallout isn't diminishing. Gary Shaw isn't effing around with the lawsuit he's throwing at Jose Luis Castillo, Bob Arum and Fernando Beltran. Shaw says that Beltran has portrayed himself as a manager and advisor to Castillo but then let slip that he also was acting as co-promoter, with Top Rank, of Castillo's scuttled fight with Corrales. Shaw is calling for Beltran to be punished and alleges that Beltran is in collusion with Top Rank to take advantage of Castillo. Shaw invokes the name of that dreaded agency, the IRS, when he says that his foes in this matter have defrauded the tax collector by paying Castillo money in Mexico, instead of here in the US, where the monies would be subject to our tax statutes. Shaw further brands Arum a liar in the presentation of his stance on the case, saying the promoter knew Castillo was overweight, and so did Beltran. Shaw wants dough he lost, dough for Corrales that he lost, and a fat punishment payout for breach of contract. All told, Shaw wants about \$12 mill from Arum and Castillo to make it right. Now, the lawyers are ready to rumble...