

Vernon Forrest Wins, But A lot of People Thought He Lost

Written by Mitch Abramson
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Not everyone left Madison Square Garden happy on Saturday night. A lot of fans left feeling low. The promoter Lou DiBella left in a bad mood, and Ike Quartey left depressed. In a bout between two former welterweight titlists, Vernon Forrest won a controversial unanimous decision (depending on who you're talking to) over Quartey in front of 3,012 fans at Madison Square Garden on Saturday.

The decision was met with a chorus of boos from the crowd who felt that Quartey's aggressive pursuit of Forrest throughout the match should have been rewarded with a victory. DiBella, Quartey's promoter, was aghast at the verdict. Minutes after Forrest was awarded the 10-round junior middleweight fight, DiBella and Quartey set up camp along press row to plead their case.

Forrest was content to fight the hard-charging Quartey moving backward, choosing his shots prudently. Forrest was deducted a point in the ninth round for a low blow, but he buckled Quartey in the third round with a right uppercut, which seemed to be the punch of choice for Forrest. Quartey is built like a tank, but he sometimes lunged in with his shots, and Forrest was waiting with clean shots.

While a lot of people were questioning the decision (95-94, 95-94 and 96-93 for Forrest) maybe the better question is where does Forrest go from here? Another fight against Shane Mosley? A trip to the bank against Oscar De La Hoya? Who knows? After this tough fight with Quartey, it's doubtful he would want to tangle with "Bazooka" again, although a rematch would mollify some of the people who questioned the decision: namely Lou DiBella, Ike Quartey, and a lot of fans.

In the co-feature, Kassim Ouma outclassed Sechew Powell in a 10-round junior middleweight bout. Kassim dictated the terms of the bout from the opening round, smiling and hopping into the ring during his ring entrance and stamping his style on the bout from the get-go. Ouma won by scores of 100-90, 96-94 and 97-93. Powell may have been from Brooklyn, but the hometown fans were nearly silent as their man was beaten from pillar to post. Ouma was simply too seasoned for Powell, who never gave up but also never had a chance.

The undercard featured the former ballyhooed prospect Jaidon Codrington, 22, fighting in his third bout since getting knocked out in 18 seconds by Allan Green on November 4. He won a six-round unanimous decision, 60-54 on all three scorecards, over long in the tooth former junior middleweight champion Carl Daniels in a super middleweight bout. Also in action was Andre Berto, an exciting, muscular 22-year-old from Winter Haven, Florida who disposed of Roberto Valenzuela at 2:19 of the first round in a welterweight fight. Berto improved to 14-0 with 12 knockouts.

Noriko Kariya, the sister of the Nashville Predators' Paul Kariya of the NHL won a unanimous decision over Michelle Herron in a bantamweight fight to improve to 5-1-1.

In a pleasantly entertaining bout, "Punchin'" Pat Nwamu (12-1, 4 knockouts) stopped John

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Battle at 2:50 of round three. Nwamu is a tricky fighter to face because of his slow, awkward style, but he went after Battle from the first round, and he was rewarded for his aggressiveness in the cruiserweight bout. In the opening bout, Darling Jimenez (20-2-2, 11 knockouts), a former amateur in New York, knocked out Arturo Brambilla at 2:32 of the opening round.