Written by George Kimball
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NEW YORK – The safest place in America must be the streets of Brownsville on a night when Curtis (Showtime) Stevens is fighting in Manhattan.

Actually, Showtime's posse was on relatively good behavior last night night. No spectators were maimed by flying chairs, and no referees required police escorts to escape the building. Nobody threw anything at Marcos Primero as he writhed around on the floor after a low blow, either, although this was primarily because Marcos never hit the deck, nor did Curtis throw any deliberate south-of-the-border punches, as he did when the two met back in July.

Stevens avenged his only career defeat, soundly outpointing the Venezuelan veteran over 8 rounds in what was nominally the co-feature of Lou DiBella's Broadway Boxing card at the Manhattan Center Grand Ballroom.

With his followers cheering enthusiastically (many of them were simultaneously jabbering away on cell phones, no mean trick if you think about it), the Brownsville super-middleweight entered the ring to hip-hop intro music, wearing a camouflage robe, his face covered by a mask wrapped around his head. It wasn't clear whether he was supposed to be a stickup artist or an insurgent.

And once he removed the robe the sight was more bewildering still. In addition to the odd corporate logo (Pro-Keds, Havoc), Stevens' trunks bore two more prominent legends – "Showtime" on the front and a bright yellow rodent on the back – along with "BROWNSVILLE" tattooed in script letters across his bare back. It was plain enough that if Primero spent any time trying to read all the messages he was going to be in trouble.

Which he was anyway. In their summertime meeting Stevens appeared to have the fight in hand when he got staggered by a Primero uppercut and was stopped with less than a minute and a half left.

Stevens took no such chances this time, controlling the fight nearly from start to finish. One of the oldest 31-year-olds on the planet, Primero even at his best fights in spurts, and this time they were few and far between: He was a dangerous opponent for perhaps a minute each of the third and eighth rounds, and for most of the fourth. The rest of the night was spent as Stevens' punching bag.

Possibly because the last time he failed to protect himself at all times Primero got nailed in the nuts and wound up in the hospital with a hernia, he seemed more concerned with warding off the Stevens onslaught, but it was often to no avail. There were at least three occasions when Stevens waded in and fired a right at the side of Primero's head. Each time Primero got his glove up by his ear to block the blow, but the sum effect was as if he were getting hit twice – first by Stevens' punch and then by his own glove getting driven into his head hard enough to move it half a foot sideways.

This time Primero was unable to mount his late charge, and Stevens won going away on all three cards, by scores of 80-72 (Alan Rubenstein), 79-92 (Tom Kaczmarek) and 78-72 (Steve Weisfeld). The Sweet Science card had it 78-74.

If anyone was disappointed it may have been the homeys who'd been demanding that Stevens avenge the previous loss with a knockout, but, said DiBella, "I thought it was one of Curtis' best fights, because of the intelligence and patience he showed. He fought with great composure. He's not going to knock out every opponent he fights, and this time he didn't press for the knockout."

Stevens' record is now 14-1, Primero's 20-16-2.

When DiBella summoned a 'Meacher Major' he probably thought he was ordering a bottle of Bahamian gin, but that turned out to be the name of Edgar Santana's Nassau-based opponent in the main event.

Santana had procured a tape of one of Major's earlier bouts, and consequently expected him to be the aggressor, which is exactly what happened. Major spent the first two rounds chasing Santana around, firing away at his midsection, while Santana, looking almost bemused, countered with lefts to the body and an occasional lead right.

By the third round Major seemed so pleased with himself that he got careless, at which point Santana dug him with a left to the ribcage and then quickly followed it with a looping overhand right that came straight down on the Bahamian's head and sent him down.

Major arose, but Santana pressed the attack, moving in to throw another left to the body, followed by a left-right combination that drove Major back into a neutral corner, where, thoroughly defenseless, he took at least four unanswered shots before referee Pete Santiago halted it at 2:53 of the round.

Major (11-3-1) said he was more surprised than hurt by the right that knocked him down, but left little doubt that he was in trouble at the end. Asked if he'd had a problem with Santiago's stoppage, Major shook his head and said "Not really."

"I wasn't surprised that the referee stopped it," said Santana. "He was out – he was ready to go."

Santana now 20-2, hasn't lost in four and a half years, and appears ready to move up the ladder.

"I think he showed tonight he's gone beyond being a local attraction, and that he might be among the best 140-pounders out there," said DiBella.

Santana's people also sounded as if they're ready to graduate from Broadway Boxing and move toward bigger venues.

“We’re going to take a nice long vacation to San Diego,” said manager Ernesto Dallas. “Then after the holidays we want to sit down and talk with Lou about where we go next, but whether it’s HBO or Showtime, at this point Edgar needs to be on national television.”

One Broadway Boxing standby, Sechew Powell, has already made that leap, and if Stevens, Santana and Buddy McGirt Jr. (to say nothing of Lou’s Staten Island junior featherweight; DiBella claims new IBF champion Steve Molitor’s people are interested in a Molitor-Starks fight) are all going to be fighting on weekends by 2007, who’s going to be left to headline the Broadway Boxing shows?

Perhaps, DiBella suggested Wednesday night, Jaidon Codrington.

Codrington, the Bridgeport (Conn.) light-heavyweight, pretty much had his way with South Carolina journeyman Johnny Brooks for the two rounds their fight lasted. After punishing Brooks with a body attack over the first three minutes, he staggered him with a solid left hook in the second, bringing a flow of blood from the opponent’s mouth and effectively putting an end to any subsequent resistance. Referee David Brooks finally moved in to stop it at 2:54 of the round. It was the fourth straight win for Codrington (13-1) in the year since his devastating 18-second knockout loss to Allan Green in Oklahoma. (Brooks is now 5-5-1.)

“I think Jaidon is back now,” said DiBella. “He’ll probably have one more prelim – probably on Jermain’s (Dec. 9) undercard in Little Rock, and by early next year I can see him in a Broadway Boxing main event – maybe against Marcos Primero.”

(If Manhattan Center regulars have seen more of Primero in recent years than they have some of DiBella’s own stars, there is a reason, said the promoter: “He always comes to fight. He’s not just an opponent. He’s always trying to win, and sometimes he does. Look at his record. Curtis Stevens isn’t the only good fighter Marcos has beaten. That’s why I love Marcos Primero.”

In the distaff bout of the evening, Canadian bantamweight Noriko Kariya had a scrappy foe in Denver’s Elisha Olivas, but won fairly handily, scoring a 60-54 shutout on the cards of judges Steve Weisfeld and Alan Rubenstein while posting 59-55 on Tom Kaczmarek’s. The Toronto-born Kariya, now 6-1-1, is a member of a family which has produced several NHL stars, and whatever one’s opinion of women’s boxing might be, it ought to be noted that Noriko fights better than most hockey players. Game from start to finish, Olivas was simply outclassed, and the loss evened her record at 5-5-1.

Cleveland lightweight Prenice Brewer, held to a draw in his previous visit to the Manhattan Center, took the issue out of the judges’ hands, dropping Markel Muhammad twice in less than a minute on the way to a first-round TKO. Thirty seconds into the bout, Brewer flattened Muhammad, thudding a short right off the side of his head, and almost the instant he got back up, decked him again with a left hook. Muhammad made the count, but appeared disoriented enough that Mike Ortega halted the action at 53 seconds of the first. Brewer is now 2-0-1, Muhammad 1-1.

Brooklyn junior middle Jamelle Hamilton struggled to solve Kenneth Dunham’s southpaw

stance, but did enough to prevail on the scorecards of two judges (Kaczmarek and Oscar Perez, both 39-37) and win a split decision. (Rubenstein scored it 39-37 for Dunham.) Hamilton improved to 3-0, while Dunham absorbed his first loss and is now 1-1.

A few hours before the Wednesday card commenced, DiBella announced the latest addition to his stable – 12-0 middleweight James McGirt Jr., who will make his DBE debut on the promoter's Dec. 14 Holiday show at the Manhattan Center. McGirt fils is trained by his father, former WBC welterweight champion and former BWAA Trainer of the Year Buddy McGirt, who is rapidly developing into DiBella's house trainer. (Paulie Malignaggi, Sechew Powell, et al.) Looking to redeem himself after being outpointed by Ouma in August, Powell (21-1) will headline the December show in an eight-rounder, along with McGirt Jr. and Staten Island's Gary Starks.

Following next month's outing, DiBella plans to showcase the younger McGirt on a February Boxing After Dark card headlined my Malignaggi. If all goes well, sometime next spring McGirt Jr. would fight a main event on the first Broadway Boxing card ever staged on Long Island.

BROADWAY BOXING
THE MANHATTAN CENTER
GRAND BALLROOM
NEW YORK CITY

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Edgar Santana, 139½, Manati, Puerto Rico TKO'd Meacher Major, 138½, Nassau, Bahamas (3)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Jaidon Codrington, 171¾, Bridgeport, Conn., TKO'd Johnny Brooks, 168¾, Whiterock, SC (2)

SUPER MIDDLES: Curtis Stevens, 165, Brooklyn, NY, dec. Marcos Primera, 162¼, Puerto Cabello, Venez. (2)

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Jamelle Hamilton, 150¼, Brooklyn, NY dec. Ken Dunham, 154, Charlotte, NC (4)

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Prenice Brewer, 133½, Cleveland, Oh. TKO'd Markel Muhammad, 130, Columbus, Oh. (1)

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Noriko Kariya, 118, Toronto, Ont. dec. Elisha Olivas, 118, Denver, Colo. (4)