

## A different sort of homecoming

Written by Robert Cassidy Jr.  
Friday, 09 February 2007 19:00

---

The home field is quite an advantage in a sport like football. In boxing, not always so much. Derric Rossy has now experienced both ends of that spectrum.

Fighting at Suffolk Community College, about 15 minutes from his home on Medford , Long Island, Rossy suffered the first loss of his career. It was a stunning 7th-round TKO at the hands of Fast Eddie Chambers, the IBF's 14th ranked heavyweight. What stung even more was that the bout – waged for the USBA heavyweight crown – was televised nationally by ESPN.

Many a fighter has fallen victim to the pressures and distractions of fighting in one's own backyard. Was that the case Friday night? No one is quite sure since Rossy did not address the media afterward. The former standout defensive end at Boston College experienced many a super Saturday at Alumni Stadium but Friday was clearly not his night. Chambers and his crafty Philly style crashed this homecoming dance.

The bout opened to chants of Der-ric Ros-see, Der-ric Ros-see (ala the Derek Jeter chant at Yankee Stadium) by the 2,500 faithful in attendance. Rossy, now 15-1, opened strong with his usually crisp combination punching. In the middle of round two, Chambers sustained a nasty cut above his left eye.

But then something odd happened. Derric Rossy didn't press his advantage. One report suggested that Rossy had suffered a pair of broken eardrums. Some speculated the former gridiron great underestimated his more experienced opponent. Whatever the reason, this was not the Derric Rossy New York-area fans had grown accustomed to seeing.

By round five Rossy was fatigued. He threw plenty of punches, but they lacked snap. The fighter who typically marches forward, found himself stepping away from the action. Chambers, who was getting by on speed and guile, began to fight more aggressively. His punches, while not overpowering, had significantly more pop than those thrown by Rossy. A tinge of desperation spread throughout Rossy's faithful.

After an exchange of punches in the seventh round, Rossy emerged and his right eye was swollen shut. Referee Arthur Mercante Jr. was watching closely while Chambers implored him to stop the bout. Following the mandate, Chambers, now 28-0, continued to throw punches. Mercante intervened and asked ringside physician Dr. Ralph Bohm to inspect the eye. He did and allowed Rossy back into the fray. Several more follow-up punches from Chambers and Mercante halted the fight.

At 6-4, 248 pounds, Rossy has exceptionally quick hands for a big man. But his greatest asset – speed – was neutralized by the 215-pound Chambers. Chambers was the quicker fighter and that was the difference on this night.

It's like what they say in football, 'On any given Sunday ...'

## A different sort of homecoming

Written by Robert Cassidy Jr.  
Friday, 09 February 2007 19:00

---

In other bouts on the card, L.A.-based heavyweight Christobal Arreola dropped Zakeem Graham early in round three and pursued him until he wound up with a TKO with only 18 seconds left in that round. Arreola is now 19-0 with 17 knockouts. Graham is 10-2-1.

Memo to ESPN, match Arreola and Chambers soon.

Long Island welterweight Tommy Rainone fought for the third time in a 20-day span (are fighters even allowed to do that any more?) and improved to 5-0 when he scored his first pro knockout against Ronny Glover (2-4).

In a heavyweight swing bout, Costas Phillipou, who may have benefited by a missed knockdown call, won a controversial decision over Rodney Ray (3-4-1). Phillipou is 3-0.

In the opening bout of the evening, Bobby Campbell (2-2-2) and Jose Guzman (0-1-1) fought to a four-round draw in the junior lightweight division.