

FNF REVU: Smith, Davis Give PPV-Worthy Effort

Written by Michael Woods
Friday, 11 May 2007 19:00

You can keep your \$54.95 pay-per-views, your all-time grosses, your pound-for-pound-pronouncements, your broken promises to give fans a toe-to-toe tussle. Give me Terry Smith and Kelvin Davis, two veteran boxers looking to regain career momentum, giving every ounce out of their respective tanks on ESPN's Friday Night Fights from the Buffalo Run Casino in Miami, Oklahoma.

It was Smith, a 35-year-old heavyweight semi-contender who got the nod in the end, by scores of 97-93, 98-92, 98-92, but let me trot out the moldy cliché here: there was no loser in this featured fight.

Smith (23-2-1, 18 KOs) and Davis (24-6-2, 16 KOs) engaged in zero dancing, and cringing defensiveness, and hit-and-run potshotting. Smith, from Little Rock, Arkansas, weighed 225 pounds, while the former IBF cruiser champ, the Nevadan Davis, who often fights at cruiserweight, weighed in at 205 pounds. Smith was still trying to live down a July 2007 decision loss to Jameel McCline, while Davis was still smarting from a TKO3 loss to Darnell Wilson in February.

In the first, Smith hurt the 28-year-old Davis with a right cross, and the smaller man was forced to slip punches with determination. Smith kept at it, landing hooks and more crossing rights. Davis looked to be clear in the final minute and Smith tried to reestablish his dominance with uppercuts. Davis actually asserted himself late.

In the second, Davis came out strong, and staggered Smith, as he got inside the taller man with the reach advantage. Davis has drawn comparisons with Tyson for his squared up style, and his aggressive style. Smith, who by the way wore camo shorts to honor Corrales, looked gassed at the close of the round.

In the third, Davis came out with Ben Gay in his shorts. He ducked and slipped, looking to get close to Smith, who tried to keep Davis at bay. The fight looked up for grabs.

The action was heated to start the fourth, and this isn't surprising when it comes to Davis, who is an all-action sort. Smith tried to hit and run as if he was the bigger being, and who could blame him, as Davis always looks to score with meaningful bombs.

On to the fifth. Smith's shots didn't look vicious but he threw with regularity, and restored his standing in the bout.

In the sixth, with Atlas seeing it 47-47 to this juncture, Davis looked to regain hand. But Smith stepped up his workrate late in the round, and that had to impress the judges.

The seventh round saw Smith use his bulk to good effect, as he bulled Davis, whose mouth hung open to close the session. Atlas increased Smith's lead to 67-65.

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In the eight round, the 5-8 Davis, bless his small soul, pressed forward, but Smith's workrate was too daunting. Also, being so squared up, Davis looked to be an inviting target.

Smith kept on message in the ninth. Hey, if Ray Austin can "earn" a shot at a title, why not give Smitty a shot, if he's willing to work this hard? But Davis didn't get depressed because he ate so many--he was still unleashing hard hooks at this late hour. And Smith didn't look daisy-fresh by this point, either. His nose was leaking red, but he kept up the volume nevertheless. The two men were buried in a corner, winging back and forth, to close the round.

Smith kicked off the tenth with a surly right, and a zesty long left hook that drew wows from the crowd. But Davis, so tough, so stubborn, kept at it, and forced Smith to keep working his utmost to keep the shorter man down. The two men swung for the fences to close the show, unsurprisingly.

Smith threw a beyond impressive 984 punches, putting Oscar and Floyd to disgraceful shame. He landed 365 blows, while Davis went 236-517 on the night. Atlas saw it 96-93, Smith.

The broadcast started late as a Nascar Busch Series race ran overtime. Brian Kenny kicked things off in studio, and started with an homage to Diego Corrales.

Colombian Samuel Miller (was 18-1, 15 KOs) took on Texan Brian Vera (12-0, 9 KOs) in a super middle scrap scheduled for 10.

Allan Green was supposed to be fighting Miller, actually, and Green explained to Joe Tessitore in between the third and fourth that an injury kept him from competing in his first fight since losing to Edison Miranda. He wouldn't specify the exact nature of the injury, and put off Teddy Atlas when Teddy pressed him on specifics.

Let me take an extra few words to plug Tessitore, and give Joe a big, fat hallelujah for his commentary preceding a tribute to Corrales.

"A lot of people this week are heaping praise on two fighters for making 120 million dollars worth of pay-per-view fights," Tessitore said. "I like my fighters to make great fights, not to be businessmen, I like them to be fighters not marketers and Chico Corrales always gave me that. He cared about the fight, which means he cared about the fans."

Atlas said he thought Corrales' legacy will be a special one, as he foresees high school coaches using his effort against Jose Luis Castillo in their first classic to fire up an underperforming squad.

Miller took advantage of Vera's propensity to throw looping shots. He fought much of the time in retreat, but was effective with his counters. Miller took the edge in landed punches, 198-154, and he got the nod on Atlas' card, 98-94. The judges rendered a majority decision: 95-95, 96-94, 96-94, though, for Vera. They apparently liked Vera's forward motion. Tess and Atlas both said the judges got it wrong, plainly speaking.

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Kenny had no pal in the studio. BK talked about the May 5 fight, and he said the bout came down to scoring, and said he scored it 6-6. Hmm, maybe it looked different in person, as I had it 8-4, Floyd, watching on from the home office in Brooklyn.

Mayweather chatted with BK via a hookup.

PBF said he dug doing Regis and Jay, and was enjoying the victory lap.

"I went out there and executed the gameplan," PBF said, with no mention of his previous promise of giving the fans some toe to toe action.

I noticed that ESPN showed only stills from the fight and I'm thinking, what HBO didn't make enough money from the PPV? For crying out loud, let anyone and everyone see a snippet! Put the thing up on YouTube!

As for a prospect of a rematch--and let me interject here, and say that of the hundreds of comments that have been sent to TSS NOT ONE PERSON HAS CLAMORED FOR A REMATCH--PBF said it's up to Oscar. "if he want another crack at it, no problem," he said.

He dissed Mosley, saying he's nothing but a sparring partner, and smacked him down for doing something for free. It's this sort of attitude that makes me pretty darned certain that PBF cannot take Oscar's place as the PPV cash cow for The Powers; people have hard time identifying with his brash demeanor. I liked some of what I saw on 24/7, his 'take me as I am' behavior, but often, PBF's posturing is extremely off-putting. I don't think the hip-hop style putdowns and manufactured beefs work as well in boxing as they do in the hip hop world.

PBF said Winky is probably too weighty now, said Cotto is a "good fighter," and thinks Cotto has a "good chance" against Zab. "That fight is who hit who first," he said. Margarito isn't marketable enough, PBF said.

Floyd said that he thinks Oscar is a "great guy," and that his trash talk was just business. So, if they do this again, and we hear trash talk, remember this line, OK, people?

Mayweather said he's doing movies, reality shows, music enterprises, and Kenny lit up at the mention of a reality show. "The Mayweathers are a dysfunctional family," he said, leaving the door open for a continuation of the 24/7 gig. BK gave him props for being No. 1 P4P, and PBF was psyched he broke down Kenny, finally. Me, I'm still with Merchant, factoring entertainment value in my P4P criteria, and thus tapping Pacquiao as boxing's top pound for pounder. Floyd is a superb boxer, but I'm partial to fighters who box well. Fighters. There's a distinction between a fighter and a boxer, and hey, if you're a purist, I hear your view. But if you want to watch technical excellence purely, why are you looking for that in a fight? And judging by the mail we get here, again, I'm in the majority on this point.

Kenny talked more about Corrales, saying he was "down to earth," and no other champion was better to fans. Kenny did a voiceover as we saw Corrales highlights. He didn't sidestep Corrales' problems with authority. We saw Corrales, not a hair of a dog in him, protest bitterly when the

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doctor stopped his fight with Casamayor because Corrales was bleeding from the mouth. We saw of course bits from the 2005 classic with Castillo, with Kenny referring to the fight as "possibly the greatest championship fight in boxing history."

In Oklahoma, there was an honorary ten count to honor Corrales.

He never broke PPV records, but just check out the comment section on the article announcing his death. That's a legacy, man. That man entertained the heck out of people, and didn't talk his whole game, he showed the fullness of his game in the arena. That man was a warrior, and we saw two warriors in this main event, and it cost me 1/30th of a month's basic cable cost to see it. Lesson.