

Zab Judah Cruises To Win On ESPN Finale

Written by Mike Lynch

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I suppose there's always the chance that I was hallucinating. But it seemed real. I was in that half catatonic state that watching a regular season baseball game often leaves you in. Baseball is one of those things in life that can be enjoyable, but I lack the constitution to make it through those dog days of summer back-end of the rotation slop-fests.

But at any rate, in the midst of the throes of my baseball coma (a condition also germane to late 90s Arizona Cardinals games) I swear I saw an ad for another "Halloween" movie. You know, the ones with Michael Myers—the creep that won't die despite the mounting evidence that he has in fact been killed in every previous edition.

Well, if Hollywood has Michael Myers to always pull back from the dead, Zab Judah is turning into a character of that sort in *Fistiana*. In fact, in a classic slasher movie twist, trying to destroy Judah actually made him stronger.

Zab Judah, once considered the type of talent that could dominate an era, was nearly left for dead heading into his June bout at MSG vs. Miguel Cotto. Cotto, the undefeated champ gave Judah a savage beating, but Super Zab was game enough to make it a fight of the year candidate and showed more collective guts in that fight than he'd displayed in years. So even as he was knocked off his feet, his career was given new legs.

This is a man who hasn't won a fight in 28 months. Just for some perspective, 28 months ago some of us were (foolishly) looking forward to Mike Tyson vs. Kevin McBride. And what an unforgettable bout that was.

But Judah's talents are such that he will always remain in the equation until there are no excuses. When he lost to Baldomir it was because he underestimated him. When he lost to Pretty Boy Floyd, his supporters pointed to his excellent first 4 rounds and the controversy of the brawl that got him and Roger Mayweather suspended. Furthermore, he was fighting on PBF's adopted home turf in Vegas. When he lost to Cotto it was because of the low blows. And even if he was the native New Yorker in the fight, it was a rabid pro-Cotto crowd that night.

And with all those excuses, we can still see the dazzling speed and coordination from the southpaw stance. It's undeniable that he matched PBF evenly for some of those rounds. And he showed some legit toughness against Cotto.

There's always that flash, even in his losses, which helps explain how he lives to the next sequel every time. And so in a Welterweight division that is remarkably strong, a man with no wins since 2005 is ranked #5. And it's difficult to fault his placement (though #6 Kermit Cintron sure looks ready to KO his way up the food chain).

On Friday Night Fights on September 7 in Biloxi, the full Judah package was on display, fistic ADHD and all. Against an overmatched, but very game Edwin Vazquez, Judah's interest waxed

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and waned, but he still has a rare bounce and tremendous punching combinations, though they were not always crisp on this night.

Razor sharp or not, Judah got in 10 good rounds against a smart, tough fighter and won by a convincing unanimous decision. His warm-up match against jobber Ruben Galvan between his suspension and Cotto was halted early due to a head butt and cut, so it was valuable time in the ring for Zab.

And his name remains in the mix for another day...

Speedbag: Miguel Cotto and Sugar Shane Mosley were both in the studio for the show. SSM once again expressed his disappointment that PBF chose Ricky Hatton over him, but is excited (on the record, at least) for the Cotto fight. It's pretty clear that it's merely a consolation prize for him, though. It's a big fight in a great venue, but not on the level that a bout with PBF would have been...

--Cotto was asked by Brian Kenney what effect he felt his low blows had on Judah in their June showdown. Cotto acknowledged that the blows took an early toll on Judah perhaps, but was certain that they were not a factor in the later rounds. Easy for him to say, I suppose, but he could be right...

--Poll results were shown during the telecast asking for predictions of Cotto/Mosley on 11/10. Shockingly, Mosley took nearly 70% of the votes. Dimpled chads anyone?...

--Also on the FNF card, heavyweight Rafael Pedro was DQ'd for the 3rd time in his pro career in a loss to Adam Richards, while light welterweight Lamont Peterson remained undefeated with a TKO over Freddie Santos

--Another one bites the dust: The Juan Manuel Marquez/Rocky Juarez card has been cancelled due to an apparent JMM injury. Hopefully, he will still be ready for PacMan at some point down the line.