

FNF Recap: Johnson Wins In Ho-Hum Fashion

Written by Michael Woods
Thursday, 17 April 2008 19:00

A young heavyweight had an opportunity to send a message to those above him on the ladder that he is a fighter with skills, someone to whom attention must be paid, at the Buffalo Run Casino in Miami, Oklahoma on ESPN's Friday Night Fights.

Kevin Johnson had a solid stage to perform on, and a fine foil, the aged vet Terry Smith, to showcase his skills upon.

But instead of buckling down and concentrating all the way through his 10 round win, and boosting his stock, Johnson reverted to the tactics and manner which has kept him from bolting up into the mix of young heavyweights who could conceivably enter the title shot mix in the near future.

Johnson took a UD10, and showed some promise, but really, he could have sent a inspired message to other hitters and industry suits.

Johnson took an 18-0-1 record in with him, while Smith stood at 30-4-1 before the contest kicked off. The 26-year-old Johnson, from New Jersey, weighed 239, while the 36-year old Arkansan Smith weighed in at 233.

Johnson has the quicker hands. He loves to pump the jab, and did so as Smith plodded after the younger man. Johnson has little pop, or so his KO ratio (six in 19 wins) would indicate.

The Jerseyite was moving more by the fourth, but not punching as much as he should've been against the slow moving Smith.

Johnson dropped his hands and clowned some in the fifth; his antics indicate that he has not listened, or comprehended the criticism that has been leveled at him to this point. Johnson has promise; he needs to get serious, and decide to work hard every minute of every round, and stay focused, instead of drifting off mentally. He started chatting with the crowd in the 7th and ref Steve Smoger asked him nicely to concentrate on smackin' instead of yappin.' Smith, even inside, when his slower hands could hit home, had no snap on his shots. There was no way these rounds should have been at all close, but Johnson simply spent more time hugging, and posing, than he should've been. His jab is enough of a weapon that he could use that punch 75% and be well on his way to a win in many a fight.

Atlas had it 97-94, and I saw it 7-3 for Johnson, despite his clowning and mental drifting, and my strong critique. Smith had the edge in punches thrown (782 to 384) and landed (207 to 194). The judges saws it 97-93, 97-93, 96-94. There were some boos from the crowd, from folks who wanted Smith to get his hand raised.

In the stidio segment, Amir Khan chatted with Brian Kenny. Khan, a 2004 Olympic silver medallist, and a top ten lightweight, unbeaten at 17-0, said that he thinks Calzaghe should've

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come to conquer America earlier. Khan said he'd be over here soon, to get a taste of our scene. Khan likes Calzaghe to beat Hopkins, with his workrate.

Also, Teddy Atlas talked to Bernard Hopkins, who said Calzaghe is not an A level stud, and has not faced the level of foe that he has. I touched on this issue in the Prediction Page intro, and am focusing on this more as we get closer to fight night.

Calzaghe, in a chat, told viewers he's stayed at a house 30 minutes off the strip, and the extra poundage will be shown to good effect on Saturday night. "This is the icing on the cake for my career," the Welshman said. He also said he considered doing some MMA training to prepare for Hopkins' style but he's hoping for a clean fight, in which he can show his technical skills.

Roy Jones sat with BK and touched on Calzaghe's fans coming to the States to cheer on their guy. We then saw some clips of each man. Jones said Calzaghe has the most to gain from a win, that he still has to cement his legacy. Jones said he should keep his punch output up, and make the older man work. Jones said Hopkins should make it rough, and use his experience edge to take the fight. Jones talked about being a senior fighter, and said that some fighters learn from their mistakes and thus can fight longer than those who don't learn from their errors. Jones said he thinks Calzaghe can pull off a decision. BK sees a 7-5 round edge for Calzaghe. An ESPN poll had 37% saying Calzaghe would win by decision, while 34% favored Bernard. Atlas too picked Calzaghe to win a decision.

Chris Byrd debuted his new body and he looks superb, so maybe there is a chance that his drop down from heavy to 175 could spur him to a resurgence. Byrd said a fight with Roy Jones would be pleasing. Not sure I agree with him. OK, I really don't. Sorry, slick vets, but I foresee a polite sparring sesh there.