

Adamek Handles Bell, Nabs IBF Title Shot

Written by Michael Woods
Sunday, 20 April 2008 19:00

Tomasz Adamek confirmed that he looks quite comfortable and confident in the cruiserweight division, and he secured a date with IBF cruiserweight champ Steve Cunningham with a stoppage win over a slightly listless O'Neill Bell in Poland on Saturday.

The homeland favorite Adamek, at 31, brought a 33-1 mark into the ring with him. He weighed 197 1/2 for the scrap while the 33-year-old Bell, coming in at 26-2-1, weighed 199 for the encounter.

Adamek scored a flash knockdown with a chopping right following a jab tablesetter with 50 seconds to go in the first. Bell's eyes were clear and his legs were strong, and the Pole didn't follow up looking to close.

In the second, Adamek was the mover and Bell followed him about the ring carefully. The Jamaican looked to land rights to the body, to get the Pole to lower his guard. Bell picked up the pace at the end of the round, and hit with an overhand right, but didn't steal it.

On to the third. Both men stand erect for much of a round, but do bend at the torso to slip. Adamek landed a snappy left hook, and then both spent time posturing. Bell worked his jab some, but he was generally short with his power shot offerings, his right hands.

In the fourth round, both were intent on being busier. Adamek scored first with a right. Both men still showed a healthy respect for the power of their foe. The crowd tried to pick up Adamek with a little over a minute to go. Adamek has a habit of taking his eyes off an opponent and looking at the ref while listening to instructions and he may want to check that habit moving forward. The round was close as neither man pulled away.

In the fifth round, Bell tried to come right out and close the distance. But when he did he got caught with counters. Too often, Adamek saw Bell's tosses coming, and ducked them. And Bell looked slow defensively, too often unable to get out of the way of shots that he saw coming.

In the sixth, Adamek smartly dropped in shots, and then took a step or two back. Bell's energy was lacking, and his jab was more range finder than anything else. Adamek looked confident and in a groove. He moved about the ring in relaxed fashion, firmly in control of his foe.

In the seventh and final round, Adamek landed sharp jabs. He snapped Bell's head back in showy fashion with the jabs, signaling that Bell's tank was dipping lower. After the round closed, Bell told the ref Robert Byrd that he did not wish to continue to fight. He later said that he felt dizzy and ill when he signaled no mas.

Adamek seems at home at cruiser, as he gained his fourth straight win at this class. He last fought at light heavy, and lost his last contest at 175, against Chad Dawson in February. He dropped the WBC belt (won from Paul Briggs in May 2005, and defended against Thomas

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Ulrich in October 2005 and Briggs the following October) to Dawson. Bell's prospects are dimmer. He lost his WBC and WBA cruiser belts, to Jean Marc Mormeck in his last outing, in March 2007. He fought just once in 2006, beating Mormeck and holding on to his IBF cruiser strap while picking up JMM's WBC and WBC versions. He turns 34 in December and may simply have had enough of the grueling, dangerous game.