

TSS Fantasy Fight: Hagler vs. Hopkins

Written by Dan Horgan

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Marvin Hagler and Bernard Hopkins were undoubtedly the two best middleweights of their respective generations. Hagler (62-3-2) dominated the 1980's with a ferocious southpaw style that only Sugar Ray Leonard could stand up to. Hopkins (48-5-1) subjugated fighters of the 2000's with brilliant technical skills and a dynamic straight right hand. Both men were always in shape. Both men used intimidation to thwart opponents. Both men fought and beat the best fighters available.

So what would happen if generations could merge and Hagler and Hopkins met in a middleweight showdown? Fans from both eras would undoubtedly pay to see the match happen. After all, Hagler and Hopkins both did everything they could to avoid defeat. And when two men who refuse to lose face off, fireworks often fly. Here's how the hypothetical matchup would have played out:

Round 1: Both Hagler and Hopkins are in dynamic shape (as always). The two men are cut, lean, and ready to rumble. Hagler is the aggressor to start. He chases Hopkins around the ring as Hopkins uses lateral movement in an attempt to thwart Hagler's punches. For the most part, Hopkins is successful. He slips around the ring and Hagler is unable to land any significant blows. Hopkins lands two emphatic straight right hands past Hagler's guard to end the round. 10-9 Hopkins

Round 2: Hagler comes out of his corner a bit more cautious. He tries to stand and box with Hopkins, sensing that his aggression won't work. Hopkins lands a solid left hook and jab throughout the round, all the while tying Hagler up. Hopkins lands a solid three-punch combination to end the round, and he walks into his corner with a big smile on his face. 10-9 Hopkins

Round 3: Hagler pins Hopkins against the ropes and lands several solid body shots. Not to be outdone, Hopkins fires back with straight right hands that send Hagler back. The fight drifts to the center of the ring where Hopkins continues to get the better of his foe. 10-9 Hopkins

Round 4: Goody and Pat Petronelli are upset and worried. In between rounds, they shared their sentiments with Hagler by telling him to step up his game. He was down on the cards, they said, and needed to turn the tide of the fight. That pace-altering blow lands for Hagler 1:26 into a slow-paced round. A big left hook rocks Hopkins who smiles and dances to the crowd's delight. Hagler pins Hopkins against the ropes and pounds away to the body. He comes upstairs and lands three solid head shots. 10-9 Hagler

Round 5: Much like his first fight with Segundo Mercado, Hopkins realizes he is in with a live dog who can certainly hurt him at any point in the fight. Hence, he is even more cautious in round five. He clinches, holds, and throws few punches as Hagler continues to come forward and throw punches in bunches. Hagler's aggression alone gives him the round. 10-9 Hagler

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Round 6: Hopkins opens up a bit to start the round, much to Hagler's liking. "Marvelous" smacks Hopkins with a robust left cross that sends "the Executioner" back into the ropes. There, Hagler opens up and cracks Hopkins with several strong combinations. Hopkins is able to fight his way back out to the center of the ring, where the fight turns into a technical snooze fest. Hagler 10-9.

Round 7: Hagler has figured Hopkins out. When Hopkins boxes, Hagler ups his aggression. When Hopkins fights back, Hagler has more openings to land bombs. Hopkins realizes his foe has the upper hand, so he does what any other tough guy from Philly would do when down: he fights street. While lunging in for a straight right hand, Hopkins' forehead collides with Hagler's eyebrow, opening a large cut. The butt is ruled accidental. Much like Hagler's fight with Tommy Hearns, the doctor looks at the cut and contemplates stopping the fight. Hagler convinces the ringside physician to allow the contest to continue. Hagler is now pissed, and he shows his anger through aggressive punching. Hopkins keeps his cool by moving side to side and effectively picking Hagler off with quick shots. But with just 15 seconds remaining in the round, Hagler scores a clean left uppercut that sends Hopkins back. The punch allows Hagler to steal the round. 10-9 Hagler.

Round 8: Neither man seems tired, but Hagler continues to pick his pace up. In round 7, he threw 98 punches. In the first minute of round 8, he throws 45. Hopkins struggles to neutralize his foe's output. Although Hopkins lands several straight right hands, Hagler has taken control. 10-9 Hagler

Round 9: Hagler bullies Hopkins against the ropes. The Brockton native's body work and combination punching is impressive. 10-9 Hagler

Round 10: The fight starts in the center of the ring where Hopkins makes a strong push to regain control of the fight. He is active and ably landing right hands and left hooks. Hopkins moves away from Hagler's left hand and clearly wins the round. 10-9 Hopkins

Round 11: In what is easily the best round of the fight, Hagler and Hopkins each open up and try to make a final impression on the judges and fans. Hopkins throws combinations like he hasn't thrown before; and Hagler takes the blows and comes forward with his own ammunition. Hagler lands several big left hands in the round's last minute. 10-9 Hagler

Round 12: As Hopkins continues to move laterally, it is obvious he has the fresher legs. Hagler makes one final push to knock his foe out, and Hopkins avoids him with pepper shots. For the first time in the fight, Hopkins pins Hagler against the ropes and pounds away. The two trade and Hopkins lands the final punch of the fight. 10-9 Hopkins

Final Decision: 115-113 Hagler.