

## An Entertaining Night Of Boxing

Written by Ron Borges

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In the end, neither Juan Urango nor Tavoris Cloud may prove to be stars but last Friday night in Hollywood, Fla. both proved to be what boxing needs most right now here in the States. They proved to be action fighters who come to entertain.

Urango retained his IBF junior welterweight title under difficult circumstances, surviving a sixth-round knockdown from the concussive right hand of Randall Bailey before going on to stop him in the 11th round, after dropping Bailey twice with solid left hands in the ninth and sending him to the floor again in the 10th. Bailey's trainer, former world champion John David Jackson, finally stopped the fight himself when his fighter began to face more unfriendly fire in the 11th round and no longer seemed to react well to it now that his left eye had begun to rapidly close.

To win, Urango first had to survive a brutal knockdown which split his right cheek open and left him nearly out cold. Groping to get up, he barely beat the count and then had to survive nearly two more minutes with Bailey stalking, his dangerous right hand constantly trying to find a way to finish him, while inside his head it sounded like the Bells of St. Mary's were ringing at perpetual noon time.

Urango did survive however but he did more than that. He refused to be dissuaded from continuing to march forward like a road grader with a stubborn job to do. He wore Bailey down with nasty body shots and then went back upstairs after the damage was done and unloaded on him with sweeping left hooks that eventually sent Bailey to the floor.

The body shots had broken Bailey down and took away that right hand and perhaps the reality that Urango refused to stay down after it had unloaded on him and he barely beat the count in the sixth contributed to his demise as well. What was unassailable was that Urango (22-2-1, 17 KO) proved to be what Bailey (39-7) was not – a relentless professional willing to absorb the required risk and punishment to deliver his own message.

The victory was Urango's first in his second reign as IBF junior welterweight champion, a title he first won by decision over Herman Ngoudjo on Jan. 30. He then chose to abandon the title and move up to challenge WBC welterweight champion Andre Berto. Although he had his moments, Urango was not strong enough to hold off Berto and so quickly returned to 140 pounds and wasted no time reclaiming a portion of that title in impressive fashion.

Whether he can capture another portion of it against, say, Tim Bradley in a unification fight remains to be seen but that was the first name out of Urango's mouth when the post-fight conversation turned to what he might do next and fight fans should be glad of it.

Such a fight would be a sharp contrast in styles and could make for an entertaining match between the quicker Bradley and the stronger Urango. Bradley would be the boxer in that confrontation but he wouldn't have to look far to find Urango, whose style is simply to bow his shoulders, walk through hell fire to get inside and then deliver body shots that lower your

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defenses until he has time to come upstairs with enough power to hurt you.

This is not to argue that Urango is a great fighter. He is not. But he is a guy who may, in the end, prove to be greater than the some of his parts, as he was Friday night against Bailey.

As for Cloud, he won the vacant IBF light heavyweight title in dashing fashion as well by overwhelming 37-year-old former champion Clinton Woods. In fairness, this was a shadow of the Woods who once held a portion of the light heavyweight title himself. He was now an aging boxer hoping to survive on guile and experience rather than on any fighting superiority but he was still ranked No. 2 in the world by the IBF, for what that's worth these days.

That Woods was past his prime should not diminish the impressive way in which Cloud disposed of him. He exhibited his hand speed, relentlessness and pure desire to reach a goal he set for himself many years ago by throwing punches in very large bunches.

Cloud was a thunderstorm of left hands and speedy combinations, pressuring the British fighter from the outset without the slightest concern that his opponent had more than twice as many ring victories as he had fights.

The undefeated 27-year-old from Tallahassee, nearly floored Woods in the eighth round after pinning him on the ropes and slamming home what seemed to be an endless barrage of punches to the head and body. Cloud (20-0) was unable to drive Woods (42-5-1) to the floor but he hurt him again in round 10 and Woods never mustered anything again resembling an offensive output, instead being content to try and survive the remaining four rounds.

Cloud was not about survival. He was about making a statement to the man whose vacated title he'd just won. Like every other light heavyweight in the world, Cloud wants a shot at Chad Dawson, the recognized best light heavyweight in the world, who will defend his own share of the world title against former champion Glen Johnson Nov. 7 in Connecticut. Cloud would like nothing better than to get a shot at unifying the light heavyweight championship against Dawson early next year. If he can continue to fight in the flashy and fierce fashion with which he dismantled Woods he just may force Dawson's hand.

As nights of boxing go, it was an entertaining one. In the end, isn't that what all fight fans are looking for?