

TSS Take 1: SWEET FEAT ON HALLOWEEN--Perez Takes Crown From Agbeko

Written by Michael Woods
Friday, 30 October 2009 19:00

Boxing fans were treated to a Halloween thriller at Treasure Island in Las Vegas on Saturday night, with two fighters exhibiting the energy of a pair of 5-year-olds hopped up on fistfuls of candy swapped leather for 12 rounds. When the cards were tallied, challenger Yonhhy Perez made off with the IBF bantamweight crown held by Joseph "King Kong" Agbeko, as Jerry Roth (116-111), Glenn Trowbridge (117-110) Barry Druxman (117-110) liked the Colombian's work rate and power quotient more than Agbeko's constant tossing.

Showtime televised two fights from the card, which was presented by Don King. Perez (19-0, with 14 KOs; from Colombia, lives in California) and Agbeko (now 27-1; from Ghana, living in NY) will likely glove up in a rematch; Perez told Jim Gray afterwards that he's ready and willing whenever Agbeko wants to dance again.

It was back and forth, a tight horserace, in the early going. In the fourth, Agbeko's D broke down a bit. Perez went to the body with regularity, but so did Agbeko, and a viewer had to figure we'd be seeing the 12th round in this one. Agbeko's sharper right and his body work took the fifth. Perez stepped it up in the sixth, and this came about because he moved his feet more. Then Agbeko came on, as he backed Perez up into the ropes, and looked to impose his will on the opponent. An accidental head butt by Agbeko on Perez caused a gash in that round. In the seventh, it was more of the same—high volume from both men, toe to toe action. In the eighth, the handspeed of both men had diminished. Neither was winging a bounty of crisp shots, but that doesn't mean there wasn't scoring. Perez especially, with a close-in right, was impressive, but Agbeko knew he needed to steal the round, and upped his output down the stretch.

In the ninth, neither man showed an inclination to back down. Perez had gashes between his eyebrows on both sides but looked like he was ready for more rumbling after the frame. In the tenth, Agbeko's superior head movement stood out, against the stiffer Colombian. With 30 seconds to go, Agbeko went down. He said it was from a butt, but it was ruled a knockdown, the first of his career. On replay, viewers saw both men coming towards each other, bang heads, and Agbeko turn his back, and drop to a knee. Ref Robert Byrd was not in position to see the cause of the knockdown. On to the 11th. We saw a tradefest, with the odd pause in action thrown in. You will not see many, if any, busier 11th rounds than this one. Would love to see Showtime finally come out with a punch-count application, see we could've quantified the scene. In the 12th, Steve Albert and Al Bernstein both agreed that this fight featured possibly the most punches they'd both seen in their careers. It was another round in which the judges earned their pay. We'd go to the cards.

In the TV opener, in a scrap for the WBC interim lightweight belt, top rated Antonio DeMarco (23-1-1, 17 KOs) stopped No. 2 Jose Alfaro (23-5, 20 KOs) in the tenth round. The Mexican DeMarco was in command throughout, and sent the Nicaraguan Alfaro to the mat three times in round ten before referee Joe Cortez stopped the bout. Perez waved it off with Alfaro taking a knee rather than absorbing more punishment. The time of the stop was 2:07. The lefty DeMarco is now set to face off with WBC lightweight champion Edwin Valero.

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Stay tuned for David Avila's ringside report. The DA was honored with the duty of scoring from press row, FYI.